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COVER: ALAN BRANDON/AR; LEFT: MARY JACOB/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: EVERTY COLLECTION; THIS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPH BY ROCK COLLINS

'I'd have thought that ditching a plane would be considered an emergency situation!'

CONSERVATIVE OUTLOOKS

I DID NOT VOTE for Stephen Harper but I applaud him for doing what is right for Canadians. ("The right is full of rain," National, Feb. 9.) I also praise Michael Ignatieff for working with his natural enemy, politicians working together to do their sworn job, to do what is best for the prosperity of Canada—how novel!

Margaret Ball, Ottawa

THE SCALD of debt and spending in the January budget was no surprise, given the circumstances. Andrew Coyne prefers to point out Harper with more than one association. A "conservative budget" would have done more consistently and internationally. It would have ensured either an election, which would have awarded financial stability, or the dissolution of a prison of cautious conservatism. Much as Coyne wishes to undermine Harper, most Canadians are confident in his leadership and most conservatives expect him to return to fiscal conservatism. Shirley Blair, Burlington, Ont.

CONYON's article on the budget perpetuates the myth that it is the "right" that wisely manages your money and the "left" that squanders it. In a conservative government over the past 27 decades there have been periods and under, among high deficits to mop up. It was a liberal government in the '90s that presided over increased conservative fiscal management and took little from a Conservative opposition for it. Perhaps it is time to abandon cynicism, cut dated and deceptive labels. G. Alan Taylor, Ottawa

EXCEPTIONAL MESS

ANDREW COYNE, the former Mac and Freddie Mac of a little too easily in his article "Can we intelligently carry out this mission?" (Special Report, Jan. 16) First, because Prime Minister and Freddie were government operations, they were allowed special regulatory status to defer to capital issues. As for any comparison to the mammoth 10 to 50 for any other bank: Second, they were exempt from any and all state and federal taxes. This was serious, to drive home the point that it wasn't a bank of regulators, but the government's acceptance to the rules that contributed the mess to the pleasure of the U.S. housing market. Clingmeyer Taylor, Mississauga, Ont.

PAY CUTS SAVE JOBS

STEVE MARCH writes "Take a pay cut to save jobs!" No thanks! (Business, Feb. 9.) When I started to work for Hamilton-Parkland in 1989 they were a well respected employer, in part because there was no history of layoffs since their inception in 1939. After four months on the job, my salaries were cut five to 10 per cent as sales had suddenly fallen, and all trained employees were retained. Of course, it was union union conventions, Morale never suffered, and within 12 to 18 months our sales were back to where they had been. Over the next 15 years we had great growth and we



all benefited from wages, profit sharing and a share purchase plan. Both employer and employees are winners when there is a respectful and co-operative relationship. Don Himelesman, Victoria

HEARTS AND MINDS

REPRODUCING BIASISTS may find some amount of success ("Biologicalism a phobia," World, Feb. 9.) But this is after the fact that the phobias have already done the damage they are supposed to impede them to be placed on presenting new phobias (discussing the acts of terror). Current efforts have not been made to make Muslims better than the West as a net effect. The penalty that America has been imposing in its dealings with the Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq has to be changed. Only then there is a good chance of not having to deal with jihadists. Syed A. Rahman, Edmonton

MUSHROOM CLOUDS

AS AN AMATEUR mycologist, I look forward to seeing Ron Macdonald's commentary, *Know Your Mushrooms* ("The mushroom people find a friend," Film, Feb. 9.) However, I take exception to the quote in the article that "only a few species are poisonous, and are easily identified." Such a comment is most irresponsible. Until the early 1950s it was unknown that the genus *Cortinarius*—with over 800 species in North America—contained deadly species. Furthermore, *Cortinarius* is a most difficult genus for identification, and the toxicity in the genus is generally quite unknown. If the quote were "only a few species are poisonous, and are poisonous," that might have been a pen. Peter M. Rabe, Ogden's Cove, Ont.

PREPARE FOR LANDING

AVIATION SAFETY expert Robert Heinrich tells Macdonald's (Interview, Feb. 12) that flight crews receive specific training to cope with emergency situations, but that the crew on the flight that landed on the Hudson River hadn't trained for ditching. I would have thought that ditching a plane would be considered an emergency situation. Gary Anst, Portland, Ore.

INTO THE MYSTIC

YOUR SHOULD NOT have said the word "mystic" in your headline. "Mystic" leads leading space in Google (World, Feb. 9). The fact that this mystical encounter says he is a spiritual leader does not mean that he is. By definition, a mystic is always and forever a person of peace. Peace does not include sex, rape or murder. Terry Day, Kitchener, Ont.

THE RIGHT STUFF

I CAN REMEMBER a time when rural postal routes were right-hand drive (RHD) ("Seven points have to be done on the right," National, Feb. 9.) Canada Post stopped using RHD vehicles, and instead spent \$200 million of tax dollars to figure out how to get the drivers to obey the rules of the road, or how to develop training for ergonomically viable ways to reach across a 1.5 m out an open window area. Moreover, they were correctly using RHDs driving around on Canadian streets, including parking garages and airport terminals. The Saskatchewan bylaw enforcement officers are driving around in imported RHD Minis-

suks, reportedly purchased for \$60,000 per vehicle. Even the United States Postal Service uses RHD vehicles. Maybe Canada Post could ask them where they got them. J. Paul Lang, Victoria

POLIO PORTFOLIO

BILL GATTA's assessment of \$6.66 million is a helpful piece ("Beating polio," Seven Days, Feb. 9) personally done in the media attention it has received. We now have the opportunity to eradicate polio from the face of the globe. Why, then, is no mention ever made of Rotary International's contribution to the fight over the past 24 years? Since 1985 it has committed over \$500 million. Your readers deserve to read the whole story, including contributions by countless other donors and the millions of volunteers who have made it doable a reality. Jack Zahaski, Vancouver

PACIFIC PUCK LOVERS

MACLEAN'S AMERICAN associates "Can we please now turn lighting on hockey?" (Sports, Feb. 9) that's an indication in asking "Can we please now turn on?" The two questions are inseparable by the love of violence. Perhaps participation of the military should be our ultimate goal. George Dunbar, Victoria



HOCKEY FIGHTS "Look at the price of the paying customers!"

IF YOU WANT to know why we still have fights on hockey, just look at the photo you see, and the price on the face of the paying customers who are watching David Cassio smash his hand on the ice. Ron Cowart, Norwood, Ont.

COMMISSEUR GARY BETHMAN quickly the rushes arguments in favour of banning fights in hockey by saying, "I think our fans enjoy this aspect of the game." If that is the case, perhaps Bethman should consider ensuring at least one fight per period. That should be enough to placate the wishes of Don Cherry, David Mulvaney, Mississippi, Ont.

WAS THE accidental landing of Brian Burke and his ilk would change one of their sons was killed in a hockey fight. Maybe Bob Thompson, Victoria

HOCKEY IS THE only organized sport where fighting is accepted and considered part of the game. It's made people forget what hockey really is a game of skill and sportsmanship. We do seem to see Alexander Ovechkin or Sidney Crosby land down with a career ending injury by some unforgotten if you support fighting in hockey, then your answer is yes. And if that's the case, then you might prefer to watch hockey, WWE or UFC. Leave hockey to those of us who love the sport. To say that fighting can never leave hockey because it's always been there is the weakest argument. If the NHL officials don't have the guts to ensure change for fear of

fan reprisal then they might as well go back to their cars and hear their wives—because "that's the way it's always been." Consider Lisa DeVine, Vancouver

MY FRIENDS and I are disgusted by the violence that is encouraged in the NHL. We no longer go to hockey games and very seldom watch it on TV. Hockey has become ridiculous and incredibly not to us—entirely Canadian. Any individual who throws or responds to a punch or an elbow should get an immediate five-game suspension—and no pay. Referees that stand by and allow any violence should get the same. We want our wonderful national sport back. Bert Mannik, Vancouver

A SPECIAL LIFE

THANKS TO Rachel Woodall for the wonderful profile on Susan Arlene Flanagan, the Ford woman who recently lost her life in a workplace tragedy (The End, Feb. 12). Often workplace deaths become just another statistic. However, your article captured the spirit and essence of a life that was too short. A workplace fatality can happen to anyone at any time, anywhere. Thank you for not only bringing the importance of workplace health and safety to light for your readers but also for shining a light on a special life. Margaret Black, President and CEO, Industrial Accident Prevention Association, Mississauga, Ont.

IN PASSING

GARY ROSENBLICK, 62, actor. After the murder of their son at the hands of Clifford Ochoa, Rosenblum and his wife, Sharon, worked tirelessly to support the plight of crime victims. They lobbied for police protocols in notifying next of kin and for victim-impact statements in criminal trials as well as tougher parole conditions.

JAMES WHITMAN, 51, actor. Well-known for his one-man stage shows, he also had a long film career, appearing in *The Shawshank Redemption* and as the head server in the film *Platoon* of the 1980s. He also appeared in *The Godfather* and became known later in life as a producer, producing *Requiem for a Dream* on TV commercial.

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BESTSELLERS
COMPILED BY HELEN BETHUNE
FEBRUARY 12, 2012

Fiction

- 1 **THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS** 4.99
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- 2 **THE ASSASSIN** by John Grisham 3.99
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- 9 **IN SPITE OF MYSELF** 4.99
by David Foray
- 10 **THE GOOD BOOK** 4.99
by David Foray and Laurie R. King

LAST WEEK'S ORDERS (ALL \$1.99)

Raul was focused exclusively on wildfires that swept the country's northeast, and whose 270-plus deaths will be described as "genocide." On Monday, after learning that some of the 400 fires appear to have been deliberately set, he declared the arson to be "mass murder."

For another, as the author reflects in one justice's opinion, written in a dissent, but by Cory Mitchell, chief justice of the Supreme Court, doesn't let the silence stand on its own. The book is called on the legal community to follow the lead of the U.S., where lawyers are reducing legal costs by allowing clients to do some basic work themselves. The practice, called "unbundling," means that as many as 40 per cent of litigants now do some of their own legal work, backed up by a lawyer. Mitchell's conclusion is to support an effort to control legal costs in Canada (see "A third course," page 48) because it's imperative that every one continue to have access to justice. Poor have been suing for years in Canada, and lawyers have little incentive to change. Only through constant pressure from the public, and transparency of Mitchell's history, can we begin to resolve the trend.

What with its ongoing nuclear program, and the government's consistent use of terrorism and violence and hostility toward the West, Iran has been a source of much goodwill in Saudi Arabia. It is the religious authority of moderate, independent Mohammed Khatami in Iraqis' eyes, who has announced his intention to renounce the policies that have made him president, that has given Iraqis a new hope. Khatami has been hard-line Mohammed Ahmadinejad, the new president, who has vowed to increase Iran's nuclear program. Khatami has been hard-line Ahmadinejad, who still denies the support of the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, despite the state of Iran's troubled economy. But the past three years have been a rebalancing for Iran's moderate voices, and the fact that

Thamara calls openly for dialogue with the West, qualified as a brave and welcome stand in an increasingly volatile part of the world.

At least it's a start. The parliamentary justice committee is reviewing Section 13 of the Human Rights Act—the section that makes it illegal to publish

DIRECTOR CLAUDE CHABROL holds the Berlinale Camera award for lifetime achievement, awarded this week at the Berlinale film festival.

anything that is likely to "expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt." This is the law that was used to deny Macleod's and other media outlets before his trial rights. In the last year, Macleod's was cleared of wrongdoing in B.C. and other common sense rejected the case, but no common sense believe that the action is an unacceptable limit on free expression in this country. Finally, the Liberals and the NDP are on the record supporting Section 11 and Prime Minister Stephen

Harper has indicated he has no plans to change the act. Still, the review is an important first step if we're ever going to get an impartial defence of Canadian Charter rights to free expression.

Someone must have reminded Grammy organizers that its purpose is to celebrate music. The performance-stuffed relocat was one of the best shows in years.

The awards didn't take the safe road either: Coldplay performed with rapper Jay-Z; Taylor Swift, 19, and Miley Cyrus, 15, produced a surprisingly sweet rendition of Swift's toco, angst-lit *Fishbowl*.

submitted for Chris Brown are also with Al Green after Brown was busted on a charge of domestic violence. And who would have thought the unlikely coupling of old-school rocker Robert Plant and bluegrass queen Alison Krauss would scoop five awards—including album of the year? "I think it's a good way to spend a Sunday," said Plant, who served as bouncer at a Led Zeppelin

A Finnish technology entrepreneur and self-proclaimed "futurologist," he believes that television will soon be small enough to fit inside your internet lens. In a newly released report, Jan Pearson predicts that the mini-TV will be powered by body heat, controlled by voice commands, and be available in stores within the next 10 years. If he's looking for someone to test the product in advance, Pearson may want to consider Sarah Jones. This week, the *Futurama* star broke his own Guinness world record for non-stop TV watching (clocking 72 consecutive hours without closing his eyes).

The cold, depressing truth about Afghanistan seems to be settling in—both for the NATO allies, and for Afghans themselves. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband admitted to reporters that NATO forces are stalemated in a “static war” with Taliban forces, and Richard Holbrooke—the new U.S. envoy to the region—acknowledged a security conundrum in Muslim-ruled western Afghanistan.

be "much tougher than Iraq." That grim assessment may be shared as an American public that has paid scant attention to the country since 2001. But thanks to new daily attacks and information from Taliban thugs and rampant corruption, Afghans are losing hope. A new poll conducted for the BBC shows a steady decline in support for the central government and a sharp plunge in confidence that the

country is on the right track. In 2005, 83 per cent said the government of Hamid Karzai was doing a good job, today that number stands at 48 per cent. Support for NATO's presence in the country has also slipped to 63 per cent, from 78 per cent in 2006. All is not lost in Afghanistan, but NATO needs some success soon, or the window to counteract the rise of the Taliban will be closed.

breaking news: the economy is still in the tank. Unemployment figures jumped twice (to 50 per cent) in December, 25,000 Californians lost their jobs in January and economic progress over the previous could be out of work by the end of the year—boosting the unemployment rate to almost nine per cent. But not everyone is feeling the economic pain quite so keenly. Despite all the doom and gloom, if you get laid off from the California Revenue Agency you'll probably still receive a pay cheque. A newly released study says the department has lost 300 employees since 1995, but critics and lawmakers fear 1999 because hundreds of former employees were retroactively let on the payroll after they quit or were let go. But don't worry—the IRS has said department that's supposed to make sure you don't cheat on your taxes.

Microsoft's founder Bill Gates didn't make a lot of friends when he released a pair of magazines was a root of tech industry tensions last week in California. Gates was making a speech about the rampant spread of pirated software, one of the central pre-occupations of his charitable foundation. The audience consisted of the Woodstockers, and Gates assumed that the Woodstockers weren't really affected, but bags of ammunition had already been passed out and the audience continued to yell Microsoft's name. Sometime in the past couple of weeks, several Forest Diggers may have reported that Gates had become unfriendly with a notorious software virus known as Conficker. Apparently Microsoft had sent out warnings

containers and a patch to protect Windows-based computers from the bug, but someone in the French military failed to keep their anti-virus software updated. Henceforth, all French airborne pilots will be trained on a new defensive protocol familiar to all Windows users: in case of emergency—Cmndr-Air-Delet.

At first, implications of global climate change weren't that strong. A new study by University of Toronto geophysicist Peter Melnick suggests that many of the published assumptions of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change may be too optimistic. Melnick and his co-author Peter Clark say that the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet could cause ocean levels around North America to rise by more than six metres, inundating Florida and the low-lying areas of the Maritimes. Perhaps the most alarming conclusion is that such a massive melt could alter the earth's rotational axis, the axis around which the planet rotates. That might have major environmental, ecological, destruction, species extinction, and, now, perhaps even a larger war in the northern hemisphere. How could all of these have failed to mention that?

There's an imbalance of power among American sports athletes. Olympic medalists like Michael Phelps is a photographed celebrity from a photo. He apologizes, is suspended for three months from the U.S. and loses a long back-slap, but, although there is no doubt he legitimately won his medals. Then there's basketball player Blake Leeper, who after being out by Sports Illustrated, admits to taking performance-enhancing drugs. From 2001 to 2003, the year he was named American League MVP. There were no legal tests for steroid use at Major League Baseball at the time, so there'll be few repercussions for A-Rod. Records from that black era are tattered, but count on baseball to look the other way. ■



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¹⁰ The OECD reports that a minimum of 10% of the population must be in the labour force to be considered a labour market. The OECD also reports that the labour market is defined as the population aged 15 and over who are in the labour force. The OECD also reports that the labour market is defined as the population aged 15 and over who are in the labour force.



'Canadians mainly see all the injuries, all the death. If they saw the development work, they might ask for the troops to stay.'

KANDAHAR'S NEW GOVERNOR, TOORYALAI WESA, TALKS TO JOHN GEDDES ABOUT HIS HOPES, HIS SAFETY AND WHAT HE MISSES ABOUT B.C.

Agriculture expert Tooryalai Wesa, 35, grew up in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, but has lived in Vancouver, B.C., for 12 years. After spending much of the past four years back in Kandahar working as a development coordinator, he was appointed Kandahar's governor last year.

Q You were in Europe in 1991, with your wife and three daughters, when mujahideen fighters overthrew what had been the Russian backed government in Kabul. How did you end up in Canada?

A: We went first to Switzerland. I applied to different universities in Canada and back to the University of British Columbia accepted me as a Ph.D. student, and we moved to Vancouver. It was a hard time—a word of English, three children. My wife was a graduate-level medical doctor, but she wasn't able to practice. In 1992, I completed my program. I taught for a year in so in the Asian studies department at UBC, then started working as a coordinator on Afghanistan with international organizations.

Q And that work brought you to President Hamid Karzai's attention?

A: My last assignment was from October 2006 until September 2007 in Kandahar. After that I needed to go back home for my family's unemployment. When I was leaving Afghanistan, I met President Karzai and he

asked me to work for his government. I told him I could not because I had responsibilities at home. Then, last year, during the first week of December, President Karzai's secretary called and said, "The president wants you here." I got a ticket for Dec. 15, I was in Kabul Dec. 17, I met the president Dec. 18. He offered me this job. I came to Kandahar on Dec. 19, and here I am.

Q What made you want to go back, leaving a safe, relatively easy life in Canada for such a difficult task in Kandahar?

A: Everybody asks me this question. I had been in Canada since 1995. But still I was always working on Afghanistan. Now is the time that the country needs us. As a person who grew up here, now is the time to show what I know. Plus, in addition to my knowledge, my education, I know the people here. I know the social structure here, the tribal structure. I can connect easily to the people here. The people will tell me things they will never tell to an expert. Right now I've a bridge between my two homes, Canada and Afghanistan.

Q What has changed in Kandahar since you were a kid growing up there?

A: At first came back in 1988, after 17 years away. People were so lost, so worried. They had been through a lot—the drought, the fighting. Many of their last family members. Two of my younger brothers were here. It was difficult for me when I went to see their houses to meet their families. They were sorry at me. They didn't know me and I introduced myself, and we talked and got used

to each other. The buildings I remembered [in Kandahar City] were mostly destroyed. Slowly, slowly I got used to the people from my home district, Arghandab. I mentioned some names I remembered from my village, my grandfather's name. They were very responsive.

Q You're a highly educated agriculture specialist now, but you started out life as a rural village. What you came home to Kandahar did you find the traditional rhythms of life as you remembered them?

A: I remember the connection within the farming family. They were learning from each other, grandfather, to father, to son. These connections were not there because a large gap had developed. During these last 20, 25 years, most of the farmers replaced their agricultural equipment with guns. It was hard to bring them back, to push them back to their farms. They were making more money with their guns.

Q How?

A: Millions, different warlords, smuggling. It was easy money for them than to work the land on the farms. And people were growing poppies, because there was no market now for other agricultural products, no rice, no cotton because of the market. Roads were destroyed, bridges were destroyed.

Q You're a Pashtun, and those of us following the news from Afghanistan have come to think of the Pashtun as a warlike people. Hard to govern. What would you say to those who have that negative?

A: Pashtun is a peculiar identity. They are people of that word. If you position something, you will do it, no matter what it costs you. They are not war lovers. They are trying to defend their rights, their property, their privileges.

Q What about Kandahar itself? We picture it as a sort of wild frontier.

A: In January, the political Afghanistan is controlled from Kandahar. This was the capital of Afghanistan 200 years ago. Most of the kings, as the history of Afghanistan, were from Kandahar. Even the Taliban. President Karzai's family is from this area.

Q What are your top priorities for such a progress in Kandahar now?

A: I'm very focused on bringing security to the people. That's why I have regular meetings once a week with the National Army, the National Police, the National Police, the ISAF [International Security Assistance Force], plus the provincial council, plus the tribal leaders.

Other than that, I will be focused on agriculture. Kandahar is very famous for its agricultural products, but the infrastructure is completely destroyed. If they can connect farms to markets by creating some roads. The [Canadian-funded] Doha irrigation dam project is huge. It will bring a tremendous change in the situation of Kandahar. It will start helping by road, health, and will include 10,000 animals and more, and 10,000 hectares of land will be irrigated there.

Education will be the other ones. We lost a very large percentage of the educated population. They left the country. There are just about like me, if you look at Toronto, if you look at Ottawa, California, the East Coast. Those who were left here were taken by the NGOs, because of the high salaries. What was left for the government are all the leftovers. We can't find more qualified people. That's a problem for the government.

Q How will you get the education reform you want?

A: Kandahar University here is important. I'm trying to connect to Canadian universities. I talked to [Minister of International Cooperation] Peter Giddens, and also to [Defense Minister] Peter MacKay who was here, and then [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper. I tried to congratulate me, I also discussed it with him. Hopefully we'll connect our medical school to the Canadian schools, probably UBC. I'm introducing to talk to the University of Guelph, which has a good record in agriculture and development in Third World countries. I'm planning to establish an advanced agricultural technology center,

plus an agricultural high school.

Q Those sound like long-term goals. Are there things you can accomplish quickly?

A: I've started. If I am of road to be paved inside the city, I'm planning to pave three kilometers each month. People are so happy about that. For the past two weeks I've started three in five hours of electricity in the night time, or four hours in the daytime. People are so happy about that.

Q While you go about your work, how big a concern is your personal security?

A: One thing is distributed equally among humans beings, that's no discrimination in death. Prophets die, kings die, politicians die. We all die sometime. In Canada, a plane crashes, a train crashes. My second is very dear. I have no conflict with the people. I didn't coordinate anybody's land. I didn't force any meetings, the daughter and the sister of someone. So that's why I'm not worried too much about my security. Plus, there's good security here, especially from the Canadians. They are very kind to me and are taking good care of me.

Q What's day-to-day life like for you? Do you have time to relax?

A: I'm here in the governor's compound. It's a very nice building, a beautiful place. It's a huge house. Three friends come here at night. In fact, they tell me: We have dinner together sometimes. We have some Kandahar food. We have a good time here.

Q What's a good Kandahar dish?

A: Now is the winter time. The tradition from long ago, when the meat was not so good in winter, when it's dry meat. Sometimes all the bones, and you eat of it, and you eat it in the open air. It's called *loof*.

Q How's food life?

A: Very much, very much. Actually, when I came I asked a friend and he listed me some lamb.

Q You and your wife have listed three daughters in Canada. How are they doing?

A: My oldest daughter, she graduated from the University of British Columbia, she's a resident doctor in UBC Hospital in gynecology. My second daughter finished UBC in commerce and is now at Western University, second-year law school. My third daughter graduated from UBC in commerce and works in Vancouver for a transportation company. I'm very proud. Everybody tells me, "You made a good pension plan."

Q Other than your wife and daughters, do you want anything else?

A: Of course. Some friends I have there, with they were here. The nice boys are there, the musicians, Spanish band. There's a lot to miss in Vancouver.

Q What's your opinion of the Canadian government's plan to reduce all of Canada's

troops from Afghanistan in 2011, especially now that U.S. President Barack Obama is pushing for all NATO countries to stop up their commitments in Afghanistan, as he plans to leave U.S. first?

A: Karzai and the Afghan government in general are very impressed with the Canadian work. I reached to three or four districts, and we together with the shura, the district council, and people were so impressed, very happy with the Canadian. The problem is that in Canada, the Canadians do not learn much of the development work. They rarely see all the injuries, all the death, all the explosion. I wish the media could be encouraged to show more of the development work. That would help to convince Canadians, and I'm sure Canadians would ask for the Canadian troops to stay.

Q Anything else you'd like to say to Canada?



'President Karzai's secretary called and said, "The president wants you here." I got a ticket and here I am.'

lets from your new position as governor?

A: I'm sure that we very many people, very young Canadians, who would love to help Afghanistan, and would love to see your troops successful here in Afghanistan. My request would be to support us by sending some volunteers to teach some English language in [Kandahar] University.

Q How long do you plan to serve as governor?

A: As long as I will see what I can do. If I'm successful, I will stay for some time to bring everything on the right track. If not, I will go back home. ■

CANADA'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH BARACK OBAMA

We like him more than Americans do, with some small concerns

BY CHARLIE GELIN We love him, with an asterisk. The broad-based love for Lincoln-esque baritone, the sense of the mission as master of multilateralism—the all-around Barack Obama the perfect U.S. president in the eyes of Canadians. Obama knows we've been waiting. When the motorcade rolls down Wellington Street as it winds, or pulls up to Rideau Hall, you can expect wide-eyed kids to line barricades with paper flags, no matter how foul the Ottawa weather. Eighty-two per cent of us say we approve of Obama, the polio-inflicted one, and the number requires a moment to digest. Never mind American politicians. Who's the real American we can say that about?

Where Angus Reid Group has queried Canadians last week on behalf of Macdonald's, the lines practically glowed with excitement over a potential new act in Canada's U.S. relations. More than half of respondents say they think Obama's economic policies will be good for Canada—however bleak the outlook for the U.S. economy. Some were for his energy policy, while half as out of 10 scored support for his environmental program (remember that), suggesting Stephen Harper got it right when he proposed a plan to coordinate the two countries' climate change strategies.

The results spoke to the affinity Canadians have felt toward Obama since he burst onto the U.S. electoral scene, earning a fresh name for a country a lot of us had given up trying to understand. After eight years of voicing disbelief, if not scorn toward the previous administration, 41 per cent of our respondents were greater believers in the U.S., compared to just one per cent who think we should distance ourselves from our southern neighbors (44 per cent think we should remain the same level). And it's clear that Canadians are flattered by his decision to put on a side the top-of-the-hierarchy 60 per cent of those polled say they plan to follow media coverage of the visit, which will last only half a day.

To describe this as a break with the recent past is not a useful understatement. The last time Canadians were asked, we noted George W. Bush's global leadership below that of Russia's Vladimir Putin, and we have consistently voiced hope as politicians that better relations would follow the center Ellen Austen

line, aren't it built as Canadians on Obama these days, giving him an approval average rating between 64 and 73 per cent, depending on which day the polling. In Washington, things have been downright tough: two of Obama's key political opponents have been barred to withdraw due to tax irregularities, and his stimulus package has been subject to a hail of partisan opposition in Congress. He may be glad for the break in a place where the honeymoon remains in full swing.

Still, we are Canadians, who breathe Obama will also get a taste of the old-time fashion that runs through our optimism. Inevitably we sit, like all American politicians—most notably the “boy American” requirement in the stimulus package—has some long-standing misgivings about Congress's tendency to pull up the drawbridge when times get tough. Those fears were reflected in our poll results. When asked if Obama would be good for Canada on cross-border trade, as in the auto industry, the numbers dropped to 41 per cent, and 16 per cent, respectively. “Particularly his popularity,” says Mike Camacho, Angus Reid's vice president of public affairs, “Democratic governments are always perched on their precariously.”

So the asterisk is warranted, more so for Canadian leaders than for Obama himself. Several old Washington hands told Macdonald that the government is lucky for the chance to replace an unknown while the new President is still fresh in the job. “There are the stars and stripes and the stars,” says Michael Kerger, Canada's ambassador to Washington from 2005 until 2007. “After the first six months or a year or two, the pressure comes.”

Given the Canadian inclination to blame our problems on our southern neighbor, Kerger adds, it is important to note the news before the bloom is off the relations ship: differences will almost certainly increase, forcing both sides to put politics before friendship. Trade barriers, America's blocking borders, Arctic sovereignty, Obama's promise to review NAFTA—these are just a few of the issues bound to test the countries' mutual ties.

Wishing that were a lot more difficult for genre material than it is for presidents. “Historically, there's always been a pitfall to be paid for being seen to be close to the United States,” notes Tim Hetherington, director of the Montreal Patterson School of International Relations at Carleton University. And while

Bush's departure reduces those risks, it also raises complications. Under Bush, a prime minister could score cheap political points by defying the White House, or beating grandly when it extracted some small concession from the administration. That won't work under a president Canadians happen to like, and wish whom they must their government to co-opturate. If you can't smile deal with someone as constructive and dip-

lomatic as Obama, voters might be assembly risk, what level of negotiation are you?

The good news for Canadian leaders is that our expectations are surprisingly low. Fully 46 per cent of those polled expect the current U.S. government to be no more graceful toward them than the last. Less than half think Washington's stimulus package is likely to aid the economy. In short, don't's numbers to get up too high. More importantly, we've made

up our minds on what threatened to be the most divisive foreign policy question facing the country: where asked whether Canada should keep troops in Afghanistan should Obama request it, 65 per cent said no while only 16 per cent said yes. “We paid at the office by time on Afghanistan, and this is starting to permeate the Canadian psyche,” says Kerger. “It's not so much a question of being supportive to the Americans as whether

the war should be waged. If I had if you asked them, Canadians would tell you Obama should be wiping it, either.”

That broad sentiment will come as no surprise to Stephen Harper, who has held his election promise to end Canada's military mission there in 2011. Still, as a reflection of the Afghanistan issue may prove the least of the Prime Minister's worries when it comes to U.S. relations. Harper scored well below Michael Ignatieff's poll on key measures of confidence, with fully 40 per cent of respondents saying the Liberal leader would be better in managing relations with Obama, compared to 29 per cent who thought Harper would. Ignatieff also topped the Prime Minister on the question of who would stand up to Obama if Canadian interests were threatened (34 per cent of those polled chose the Gen. leader, 16 per cent picked Harper). All of the points in some serious approval problems for the PM.

The question is whether anything else does during this week's visit will ease those problems. Canada, for one, has no doubts. The pollster points to Harper's 34 per cent job approval rating for the Macdonald survey, which has four points behind Ignatieff's, and media's growing desire from the double-digit leads Harper enjoyed over Ignatieff's predecessor, Stephen Harper, before the government's catastrophic fiscal update last fall. Canada's rising stature with Ignatieff's qualifications for the responsible shift (“he's a professor, he lived in the States”) along with a steady drip of support from the NDP back to the Liberals. Others suspect the numbers have less to do with Ignatieff's foreign policy credentials than concern about Harper's judgment. “His problem is that Canadians have to some extent lost confidence in his leadership,” says Hetherington. “Harper's political challenge in this upcoming summer is to see if he can get some of the Obama glow to shine on him.”

It is the sort of thing to which Obama has become accustomed—his faith in his power to ease the fortunes of others. And it's not like the Conservatives are the only ones adding up his hours. Ignatieff lodged his own request for an audience with the President, lest the Conservatives revive their fortunes under the man's reflected light. Given the depth of Canadian adoration for the new leader of the free world, that's probably not a bad play for now, at least, everyone's ignoring the asterisk. ■

Approval rating in Canada



Approval in the U.S. 64%

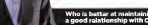


Approval in the U.S. 64%

Which Obama policies are good for Canada?



Who is better at maintaining a good relationship with Obama?



Who would stand up to Obama?



Should Canada stay in Afghanistan if Obama asks?



Source: Angus Reid Group, Jan. 3-5, 2009. Angus Reid Group is a national, non-partisan, non-profit public affairs polling and research organization. For more information, visit www.angusreid.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PHIL LANE
Feb. 3, 2009. Angus Reid Group is a national, non-partisan, non-profit public affairs polling and research organization. For more information, visit www.angusreid.com.

CANADA'S BEST PRESIDENTS

Relations with the U.S. still depend on how our leaders get along

BY AARON KERRY — In August 1913, two years before the end of the Second World War, president Franklin D. Roosevelt stood at the base of Ottawa's Peace Tower and addressed his "good friends and neighbours of the Dominion." The crowd, reportedly numbering 10,000, covered over the rooftops of the capital.

Roosevelt, who had summited as a boy and later, as president at Campobello Island, New Brunswick, spoke candidly of the Nazi menace in Europe and confidently of what would come from the meetings in Quebec City between himself, prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and British prime minister Winston Churchill. "Mr. King, my old friend," Roosevelt said, "may I, through you, thank the people of Canada for their hospitality to all of us. Your course and mine have run so closely and affectionately during these many long years that this meeting adds another link to that chain. I have always felt at home in Canada, and you, I think, have always felt at home in the United States."

Parliament Hill was said to be "alive that day with a great good will." When Roosevelt concluded his remarks, Ottawa's mayor offered what would now be considered a wildly inappropriate salutation: "I hope that I will not be misunderstood," Stanley Lewis said, "when I say that many Canadians affectionately call you 'our president!'"

President Barack Obama's visit to Ottawa next week will mark such pageantry. Crowds may gather on Parliament Hill, but they will be lucky to catch even a glimpse of the man himself. "The only public event of the brief, working visit will be a joint press conference with Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Still, if the new President serves a model for an administrator's relationship with Canada, there may be few better precedents than Roosevelt—a giant of American history to whom Obama has already been compared in both reverence and potential. Though the bond between the two countries now, arguably, supersedes the influence of any individual president or prime minister, the relationship still peaks and falls on the political and personal relations of two men.

In Roosevelt's case, says University of Waterloo historian and former Liberal MP John English, "his commitment to the defence of

Canada in the later '30s was the most important thing. His willingness to try to find every way possible to help out Canada in the war was the greatest of all deeds of any American president. I think psychologically it gave the common touch-stuff. We were the most alienated place in the world, Canada and the United States, by the Great Depression. And American policies really hurt us as far as the Depression began, but Roosevelt started to undo it."

ROOSEVELT WITH KING IN OTTAWA, what peaked in 1963 may happen again with Obama



and his rise as an upstart as made peace in 1915 were very important."

His New Deal may have seen the country through the Depression and his signing, with King, of the Quebec Agreement in 1940 may have led to the nuclear concept of North American defence, but Roosevelt might also be credited with the even more complicated achievement of making it acceptable for Canadians to admire America. "At the end of the war, Mackenzie King was upset that the Niagara Falls they were putting up a statue to 'our nation's' leaders," Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, but there was no doubt that of public events, Roosevelt would have been much more popular than Mackenzie King, English says. "By the 1940s, a lot of Canadians were wanting to join the United States

There'd Canadian anti-Americanism that was so strong in 1911, when William Howard Taft was president, but that disappeared."

What period with Roosevelt, and may yet again with Obama, may in fact owe much to Taft and not, though his presidency may have reinforced the low profile as Canada-U.S. relations. He might also claim to be the genius of everything, good or ill, that's followed.

Repeated to be the lowest president in

history, his constant understanding of the Canada-U.S. dynamic is now one taken for granted as natural and obvious.

"He saw Canada as the bridge of the first and longest system of mutual goods. And that if you could bring Canada into a sort of Americanism, common Canadian life, but there'd be a big separation between the Pacific and Indian Ocean parts of the British Empire and the Atlantic. This would drastically reduce British influence in the western hemisphere, it would weaken Britain overall and would give us tremendous resources, terrific people, et cetera," says Christopher Sands, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington.

NOBODY GRUDGINGLY admired Taft; Reagan fans like him more interesting than Mulroney



"So behind this vision. We would be friends, but we would be friends based on commerce, not compassion. From Taft on, there's no question of mission. The view is, we just need to strengthen cooperation. And if you look subsequently to Taft, even though other presidents come in and have different views, this view never changes. It becomes our basic goal."

If the basic goal, for both sides, has remained unchanged, the subsequent century of change has seen, say, and all conscious relations has depended much on the particular personalities and political pursuits of the individual presidents and prime ministers. Indeed, as deep as the integration is now and as certain as the interests may become, much in the two countries' relationships depends simply on how well the two leaders get along. "I

think it matters a lot," English says. "If you read the memoirs of the presidents and the prime ministers, they tend to think it matters a terrific amount."

The tension between Prime Trudeau and Ronald Reagan makes an intriguing case study. At first glance, they seemed bound to clash. "There's a great picture," says G.D. Tye, a history professor at McGill University and author of *Leading from the Center: Why Mulroney Made the Best President*, "of Trudeau in an osseous, looking very European, and Reagan is a showman, looking out of his mind." But he points out that Reagan never fearfully in his interviews about his first meeting with



IF PRESIDENT OBAMA NEEDS A MODEL FOR RELATIONS WITH CANADA THERE ARE FEW BETTER THAN ROOSEVELT'S

Trudeau, noting how they agreed as the need for a closer North American alliance, placing the seeds of the free trade deal Reagan eventually signed with Prime Mulroney.

And if Reagan and Mulroney cultivated a firmer rapport, Reagan seems to have been more intrigued than annoyed by Trudeau. At the 1984 G-7 summit in Vancouver, Trudeau invited Reagan into 1000

Robert's Restaurant "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" during dinner at Buckingham Palace. Reagan wrote that he rushed Trudeau was putting him on the spot. Rather than overreacting it, though, Reagan seems to have relaxed trying to the challenge. He wrote about it in detail and without rancor. His more famous moment with Mulroney, singing *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* at the so-called Shamrock Summit of 1985, didn't raise a member in his auto biography.

Even Trudeau's famously tense relationship with Richard Nixon might not have been as dysfunctional as it is often made out to be. It's widely assumed the two men disliked each other, largely because White House caught on one of its infamous *White House tapes* calling Trudeau an "asocial." But the president also employed proximity to be complimentary. In another tape, he's heard remarking, "That Trudeau, he's a clever son of a bitch."

It was Nixon's vice-president and successor who made perhaps the most concrete positive move for Canada's international status. In 1976, Gerald R. Ford invited an outgoing Canada to the annual gatherings of the most powerful development economists, the summit that would become the G-7 from then. Multilateral, and often visited Canada, which seemed to indicate his tendency to view Canada favorably. The fact that he was a Republican and Trudeau a Liberal didn't seem to enter into the matter.

Beyond imploring presidents to do the right thing on the inevitable trade issues, prime ministers have occasionally looked to the White House and pro-Canadian-party signals. Bothwell says both Carter and Clinton were helpful in stressing the value of Canada as "never partners of Quebec separatism." Doing so doesn't cost a president any thing in U.S. domestic politics.

When there's a dish between America and international interests, or commerce, politicians tend, like politicians everywhere, to play to the home crowd. In Obama's case, that might eventually spell disappointment for his legions of admirers abroad, including Canadians. "It's a certain point it is more important for him to be popular in America than in Ottawa, let alone than in Europe," says Tye. Still, if he should come to be fixed on Parliament Hill and hailed as "our president" or not, so be it. ■

By John Gidder



MIKE DUFFY'S FEARS OF GETTING STIFFED
"The new election system is a way of having where two politicians come and talk together." One of them came out on top and I am afraid that when one is in bed with Dennis Williams, he will come out on top and I would have to see where that will leave me. I'll be there — Mike Duffy, in an interview with the *News and Record* on the federal budget. Duffy later withdrew the remark.

PHOTO: GREGORY HEED/CONTRAST

PHOTO: GREGORY HEED/CONTRAST

SHOCK THERAPY

How the recession is helping fix Canada's competitiveness woes

BY PETER HEARN TAYLOR • Canadians might find it hard to use any silver lining to the current global recession, or the looming \$15 billion in deficits Ottawa plans to spend to get the country out of it. But those concerned about Canada's competitiveness are seeing some good news. The prospect of economic catastrophe appears to have sparked movement on several contentious issues, and if the trend continues, Canada's economy could actually emerge from the financial rubble in better shape than ever.



GOOD FOR BUSINESS: Dalton McGuinty seems to be softening on GST harmonization

"To see the amount of progress that has been made in the last 90 days on competitiveness issues is actually breathtaking," says Tom Jenkins, executive chairman of the White, Ontario-based high-tech firm Open To. Jenkins was a member of the federally appointed Competition Policy Review Panel which reported last summer on how to improve the country's economy. Despite his worries about the massive increase in federal debt over the next five years, Jenkins is heartened by the sense of urgency shown by Ottawa and the provinces to implement his panel's recommendations.

One of the most surprising developments

is the sudden acceptance of a comprehensive national labour mobility agreement. In January, all provinces agreed to accept job reclassification from across the country, thus ensuring the need for dislocations, easing operational requirements to re-qualify when ever they move. While British Columbia and Alberta signed their own bilateral agreements in 2006, most other provinces found reasons to dilute the policy, some barriers of their local power jobs for residents. The new deal will go into effect by a month or so after the next federal election.

Another seemingly competitive issue is that agrees to be lowered from the crisis in GST harmonization. Quebec and the Atlantic provinces have already abandoned their provincial sales taxes in favour of a harmonized GST administered by Ottawa. This provides direct benefits for businesses and works to encourage wage investment. However, it can lead to higher costs on some consumer items, and Ontario and most western provinces have not agreed on these grounds.

Last week Premier Dalton McGuinty gave the idea new hope by reversing his previously intransigent position, vowing to take a "long, hard look" at harmonization. Which sounds like a vague promise, proponents of a productivity agenda not overjoyed. "I'm also fairly delighted to hear Ontario is more receptive to sales tax reform," says Peter Poschmann, director of research at the C.D. Howe Institute. "The small sales tax is an absolute basic that needs to grow." Ontario's acceptance could mean to be the domino that brings the whole country in line.

The same incremental process might also bring the country a national standard regulation after the death of a federal. A single standard to replace the current series of provincial securities laws would simplify life for businesses raising capital, and improve investor confidence. It would also bring Canada in line with every other Western country. But the provinces have wanted they'll lose their edge. The 2009 budget commits Ottawa to a new tactic on this front—tapping up those provinces willing to proceed now in hopes of creating further momentum over time. It's the same strategy that's paying dividends in GST harmonization and labour mobility.

In good times, politicians can afford to fight pretty war battles while ignoring the full benefits of economic reform. But no one wants to appear a laggard in the middle of a recession, and that's a natural progress on some important, and often intractable, competition issues. "It gives it takes a crisis to bring out the best in Canadian governments," says Jenkins. ■

Now hiring: nursing jobs on the rise



HEALTH CARE is Canada's fastest growing sector. The pay is up too.

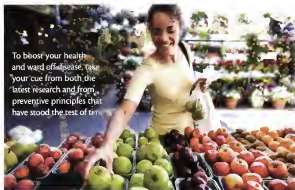
BY CATHY GILLES • If you're out of work and considering a career change, think about nursing. Last week, Statistics Canada revealed that in the midst of rising unemployment, there is one bright spot: the number of health care and social assistance jobs rose 5.1 per cent in 2008—the fastest growth across any industry over the past year.

Employment in nursing, residential care facilities and hospitals "bucked the trend," reported StatCan in its labour force survey, with the number of jobs swelling to 1,570,100, up 15,000. Even health professionals are surprised. "We don't know if this is just a blip or if it's going to continue to rise," says Karen Newfield, president of the Canadian Nurses Association. But it's promising the possibility of an increasing trend. "What's more, the average hourly wage of health employees rose four per cent over the past year to \$15.95. Newfield says nurses have been in demand, and that as the population ages, "we're going to need even more."

Still, Newfield notes that hospitals have laid off workers recently to protect their budgets during the downturn. And the union representing Ontario hospital employees predicts 5,000 job cuts if funding isn't increased. Doug Allen of the Canadian Union of Public Employees says he is confused by the reported job gains. "While there may not be much growth in unskilled nurses working in the public sector, he suggests that the number of private clinic employees may be adding up.

A 2008 StatCan report seems to bear that out. It found that between 1989 and 2005, the number of nurse aides and aides rose more than doubled, while the number of registered nurses rose by less than 17 per cent. But whatever the reason for the growth, health care appears to be a good bet. "We'll encourage people to look at nursing as a career that has a lot to offer," says Newfield. Take jobs. ■

INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT



To boost your health and ward off disease, take your cue from both the latest research and from preventive principles that have stood the test of time.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH: BRING IT ON

EACH YEAR BRINGS new health advice on what to eat and how to live to prevent heart disease, osteoporosis, asthma, cancer and other ailments. Consume one type of fat, but not another. Eat more grains. Move more. Throw in probiotics for good intestine. Run, don't walk. While, don't run. For Canadians trying to adopt healthier habits in busy, stressful lives, it can sometimes seem like a never-ending list of health information.

This guide aims to highlight a few of today's leading ideas in preventive health. A distillation of science, evidence-based research, rounded out by the clinical experience and thoughts of leading health practitioners, it offers recommendations you can adopt at your own pace, in your own care. As new habits become second nature, you'll gain the confidence to continue making healthier lifestyle choices.

Mobilize your motivation

It's important to set realistic goals, otherwise discouragement can set in if the effort proves too great, says Dr. Arun Sharma, Professor of Medicine and Chair for Cardiovascular Obesity Research and Management at the University of Alberta. Dr. Sharma offers these three tips to make your goals more attainable:

- Don't set your expectations too high
- If you don't enjoy it, you won't stick with it
- Small changes are easier to sustain over time

"Don't hop on nutritional or exercise bandwagons that don't appeal to you, no matter what the touted health benefits," Dr. Sharma advises. "Tailor all your health behaviors to your own preferences." And beware of shortcuts, like the friend who pushes you to try her new crime bruise escape when she knows you're trying to lose weight. "Arm yourself in advance with polite but firm responses to such people," she says.

Eating for life and health

Hypertension made the link between nutrition and health when he said, "Let food be your medicine and medicine your food." Some 2,400 years later, thousands of studies have no doubt about the role of nutrition in health maintenance and disease prevention.

DIET AND CANCER PREVENTION

Poor dietary habits have been linked to 30 per cent of all cancers and 70 per cent of all cancers of the gastrointestinal

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INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

system, suggests a 2007 report by the World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. The prime nutritional culprit suspected is a lack of fruit and vegetables. A growing body of research suggests that phytonutrients (plant nutrients) in many fruits and vegetables have the capacity to thwart the biochemical processes in the development of cancer. Most likely to have protective benefits are raw vegetables, followed by allium vegetables (lemon family), carrots, green vegetables, cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower), and tomatoes.

According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, eating five to ten servings of fruit and vegetables every day may help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. If those portions sound daunting, consider the Heart & Stroke Foundation's examples of portion size:

According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, eating five to ten servings of fruit and vegetables every day may help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

one medium-sized fruit or vegetable
1/2 cup raw, cooked, frozen or canned fruits/vegetables, 1 cup green salad,
1/2 cup juice, or 1/4 cup dried fruit
A cup of orange juice, a large salad, a serving of broccoli, and a handful of dried apricots gets you over the threshold.

- Toronto registered dietitian Cans Rosenbloom offers a couple of easy suggestions to help get those five-to-ten servings within easy grasp:
- Always keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen counter so it's always the first thing you see when you feel like a snack.
- Prepare a container of sliced vegetables and keep in the refrigerator

for hunger cravings and to have healthy ingredients on hand for meals.

EATING YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHY HEART

No doubt you've heard about the importance of minimizing saturated fats (found in foods like butter, cheese and meat) and avoiding trans fats (found in some processed and deep-fried foods) to preserve your heart health. Here are more good habits that can further protect your heart and circulatory system from cardiovascular disease.

Look for the "good" fat. For heart health, omega-3 polyunsaturated fats may contribute to help prevent:



SUPER SEVEN SUPERFOODS

The notion of superfoods — those with concentrated preventive powers — has gained prominence in recent years. For those of us too busy to follow the trail of aphorisms, here's a list of more "ordinary" superfoods within easy reach at just about any grocery store.

When the fresh varieties aren't available, don't discount the frozen or canned versions, which often have comparable nutritional value.

Blueberries: In addition to fibre and vitamin C, blueberries contain phytonutrients that may help prevent short-term memory loss and promote healthy aging.

Broccoli: The phytonutrients in this plant powerhouse, which also abounds in calcium, potassium, folic acid, and fibre, may help prevent heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Fiber seeds: Effective as a natural laxative, these

potent seeds may also reduce the risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, breast and endometrial cancer.

Garlic: Studies suggest that regular consumption of garlic may reduce the risk of developing gastric and colorectal malignancies.

Rhubarb: Not only high in potassium, fibre and vitamin C, it may help relieve hot flashes in some perimenopausal women. **Spinach:** With vitamins

A, B6, C, calcium, iron and magnesium among its varied nutrients, spinach contains phytonutrients that may boost the immune system and help maintain healthy hair.

Sweet potatoes: A good source of fibre, vitamins B6, C and E, folic acid and potassium, sweet potatoes contain beta carotene, which may help slow the aging process and reduce the risk of some cancers.

irregular heart rhythms, reduce the risk of blood clots, inhibit plaque build-up, promote plaque stability, lower blood triglycerides, and relax blood vessel walls. Omega-3 fats come from plant sources such as canola oil, walnuts and flaxseed, and fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines.

Make nuts a daily habit: Rich in vitamins, minerals, fibre, phytonutrients and unsaturated fats, nuts may protect the heart as much as a lipid-lowering medication when eaten regularly. Almonds are especially rich in vitamin E and magnesium; peanuts are an excellent source of folic acid, while walnuts abound in omega-3 polyunsaturated fats. Hedge your bets by eating a small handful of assorted plain roasted nuts every day.

Put beans on the menu: Eating beans improves your cholesterol profile by lowering LDL (harmful) cholesterol and triglycerides and increasing HDL (beneficial) cholesterol. Loaded with fibre and rich in heart-healthy nutrients like potassium, magnesium and B

vitamins, beans can replace meat dishes several times a week.

Nuts, beans and lentils also have a low glycemic index (GI), meaning the carbohydrates they contain are slow to digest. As such, these foods may help people with type 2 diabetes in blood sugar control. In a 2008 Toronto study, type 2 diabetes patients who followed a diet featuring nuts, beans and lentils had lower blood sugar levels after six months than similar patients whose diet included whole grains but no beans, lentils or nuts.

FOOD AND MOOD

Beyond the pleasure of eating a good meal, some foods may have the power to improve your mood. Several studies have suggested a link between dietary tryptophan (which the body uses to manufacture the "feel-good" neurotransmitter serotonin) and mood. Foods high in tryptophan include raw flax seed, lentils, barley, peanuts, eggs and bananas. High intakes of fish, meanwhile, may help counteract depression, suggests some research. ▶



SUPPLEMENTS AND LIFE STAGES

Experts recommend the best way of getting all the nutrients you need is through your diet. But, when that's not possible, supplements can help fill the gaps. With age and lifestyle changes, nutrition needs can also change and may not always be met with diet alone. Here's why some supplements may sometimes be recommended at certain stages in life.

20s: malnourished in with calcium and iron. "People may be working overtime to prove themselves and paying less attention to nutrition," says Toronto dietitian Cara Rosenbloom.

30s: folic acid may be recommended for some women on birth control pills or those trying to conceive. Necessary for the synthesis of red blood cells, "folic acid protects against neural tube defects in unborn children," says Campbell River, B.C. naturopathic doctor Ingrid Pincoff. "It gets depleted when taking birth control pills."

40s: High quality calcium/magnesium supplement, which, for some people, can help "alleviate aching joints, headaches and muscle pain," says Dr. Pincoff. **50s and beyond:** Vitamin D. Known for its role in bone health and more recently linked to a host of other benefits, this supplement is now recommended for anyone over age 50, says Rosenbloom.

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Clara Hughes,
Five-Time Olympic Medalist
and Men's Champion
Speed Skater



INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

"Vitamin D is hot right now, and for good reason. Just in the past couple of years, it has been linked to cancer prevention and heart disease prevention."

The phenylethylamine (PEA) in chocolate can enhance endorphin levels, increase libido and act as a natural antidepressant.

It may work both ways, of course, with too much of a good thing spiking in blood sugar caused by eating sugar dense foods (including, sweetened chocolate) may cause fluctuations in mood.

SUPPLEMENTS YOU CAN'T IGNORE

For most people, a healthy and balanced diet should be able to provide the daily nutrients you need. But in some circumstances, supplements may play a role in giving preventive health a boost if they help fill nutritional gaps. Speak to a health professional to determine what's right for your age and physical condition.

For instance, Health Canada recommends that, in addition to following Canada's Food Guide, all adults over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms (400 IU).

"Vitamin D is hot right now, and for good reason," says Rosenbloom. "Just in the past couple of years, it has been linked to cancer prevention and heart disease prevention." Also new is the idea that vitamin D may mitigate some of the cognitive effects of aging on the brain.

Vitamin D may also play an important role in bone health. "Our thinking around Vitamin D has changed dramatically in the past several years," says Dr. Jane Kemtner, a bone health researcher in the Department of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Connecticut. "We now believe that most adults should be taking a daily vitamin D supplement."

FEEDING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system serves as a shield against bacterial and viral infection. While the complexity of the immune system makes it difficult to ascribe specific benefits to specific foods, research has uncovered some dietary factors that may affect the immune response.

Caloric intake, for one, Obesity has been linked to a higher rate of infections, and there's evidence that eating too much – especially too much fat – may compromise the immune system's ability to fight infection. On the flip side, consuming less than 1,200 calories per day can reduce immune function – an excellent point to add to the solid case against crash diets.

Immune response also tends to weaken with age, though not in all individuals. At the same time, as many as 35 per cent of the 50-plus group have a deficiency in at least one vitamin or mineral. Nutrients shown to improve immune response in older people include vitamin B6, zinc, and low-dose vitamin E. If your diet isn't giving you enough of these micronutrients, consider topping them up with vitamin/mineral supplementation – a strategy found to boost immunity in older people.

About those pounds...

The jury is in: excess weight is a leading factor in cardiovascular disease risk, even among younger people, and may also dampen immunity. And yet, for some people, weight management remains an elusive goal. "People don't succeed because they set unrealistic goals," says Dr. Sharma. Experience has taught us that patients have a better chance of achieving and maintaining weight loss if they focus on

PREVENTIVE HEALTH

Colds and flu can be prevented

With the onset of winter, colds and flu are the Canadian population's top health concern. While most Canadians are aware of the importance of staying healthy, many are unaware of the steps they can take to prevent colds and flu. The best way to prevent colds and flu is to boost your immune system. This can be done by eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly.

Many people confuse the symptoms of the common cold with those of the flu. The major difference between the two is that colds do not lead to bacterial complications, while Type A flu can degenerate into pneumonia in certain at-risk segments of the population, especially seniors (who account for 90% of flu-related deaths), infants and toddlers, and people with compromised immune systems.

For these at-risk groups, the flu vaccine is strongly recommended. For the rest of the population, however, there are other non-pharmaceutical ways to prevent colds and the flu.

"Protecting yourself from catching colds and the flu is really just a matter of taking appropriate hygiene measures," says Dr. Daniel Theron of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Université de Montréal. "Among other things, that means washing your hands frequently, drinking lots of fluids, taking your tissues immediately after using them, avoiding stress, eating a healthy diet, and getting some exercise."



A further note: it's important to clean common surfaces used by several people – for example at the office – just smoking, and get some fresh air.

Here and more people are also taking regular doses of a product called COLD-FX to prevent colds and the flu. It's a natural product, sold over the counter in drugstores, that boosts your immune



Dr. Daniel Theron of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Université de Montréal

system response. Dr. Theron explains: "When taken regularly or when the earliest symptoms of the flu are observed, it reduces the severity and duration of the flu. Besides, the side effects are very mild and occur rather rarely."

INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

Clara Hughes, Spokesperson for COLD-FX

Five-time Olympic medalist Clara Hughes is a spokesperson for the product COLD-FX, which prevents and treats colds and flu. She has been using it for 8 years and in 2004, she paved the way for Canadian athletes who endorsed this product, such as Don Cherry, Mark Messier and Matt D'Amico.

Clara Hughes is also the first Canadian and only the fourth athlete in the world to have won Olympic medals in both Winter and Summer Games. The accomplished athlete is a two-time World Champion speed skater, a two-time World Champion cyclist, and an 18-time National Champion in cycling.

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"Experience has taught us that patients have a better chance of achieving and maintaining weight loss if they focus on increased quality of life, rather than the numbers on the scale."

on increased quality of life, rather than the numbers on the scale."

COUNTERING THE CREEP

Beyond age 23, weight tends to creep up at a rate of about one pound per year, says Dr. Susan Phillips, an associate professor in the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University. "To counter this trend," people either need to reduce their daily energy intake by about 100 calories for each decade or increase their activity every day to expend that same amount of energy," he says.

If you're already piled on the pounds, the following principles will give you a good shot at taking and keeping them off:

- **Take it slow.** Set in mind that a restrictive diet may cause "rebound" overeating.
- **Don't skip on sleep.** During sleep, the body produces a hormone called leptin, which helps regulate appetite.
- **Expect setbacks and take them in stride.** Dr. Sharma suggests you

acknowledge the difficulty of the struggle, keep the focus on health benefits, and celebrate small victories."

PROTEIN AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

What you eat can be as important as how much you eat, when it comes to satisfying your hunger cravings. "Protein induces greater satiety, or fullness, than any other food class," says Dr. Phillips.

"People who increase the protein composition in their diet from 15 to 30 per cent, without making any conscious attempts to eat less, have been found to spontaneously reduce



their caloric intake," says Dr. Phillips. What's more, he says that high-protein diets can help promote muscle gain and prevent age-related muscle loss. For these reasons, Dr. Phillips advocates a dietary mix of 40 per cent carbohydrates, 30 per cent fats, and 30 per cent protein — a diet that's "within the nutrient-distribution range advocated for good health."

Making exercise count

You already know that regular exercise helps people lose and maintain weight. Less widely known is that it pays to be fit, even if you're carrying extra weight. "High fitness levels may counteract some of the cardiovascular and other risks carried by overweight individuals," says Dr. Sharma.

Exercise also promotes the body to release endorphins, which may help alleviate the pain from arthritis and other chronic conditions. A further bonus: by boosting insulin sensitivity in the muscles, exercise can play a role in keeping diabetes under control.

"You can begin to reap the health benefits of exercise even with a mere 10 minutes at a stretch," says Jill Barker, fitness and active living coordinator in the Department of Athletics at McGill University. If time, money or opportunity pose barriers, Barker suggests "on-nose walks or bike rides — over lunch, after dinner or at the soccer field while your child is playing." For a solid cardiovascular workout, "warm-up between two minutes fast and one minute slow," she says.

WHY MUSCLE MATTERS

Baby boomers wishing to extend their quality of life must take steps to preserve their muscle mass, says Phillips, who views strength training as "one of the most important steps you can take to maintain functional independence in later years."

Healthy muscles also take a load off joints weakened by arthritis and may even have a bearing on cancer risk. ▶

Among men over 65, "there's evidence that the stronger ones have the lowest risk of cancer," says Phillips. "The same likely holds true for women." People who lack the "furnace" of skeletal muscle are also prone to feeling cold.

For all its cardiovascular benefits, aerobic exercise does not help preserve muscle, says Phillips. On the other hand, "strength training can increase muscle mass even in the very-oldest individuals, and certainly in younger ones." Such training need not be intense to yield benefits, he adds. If a gym membership isn't your cup of tea, working out with homemade weights (such as plastic bottles filled with water or sand) may work just as well.

The mind/body connection

Mental health is an important dimension of overall health, influencing

Strength training is one of the most important steps you can take to maintain functional independence in later years.



how we feel, our motivation and our physical health.

HEALTH-PRESERVING WORK

For working Canadians, an ability to handle or reduce workplace stress is proving to be an important factor in preventive health.

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends the following strategies for reducing work-life conflict:

- **Plan and delegate work to others.**
- **Take advantage of supportive policies and flexible work arrangements in your organization.**
- **Raise work-life balance issues within the workplace and community.**
- **Decline unreasonable overtime work expectations.**
- **Limit the amount of work you take home and keep it separate from family time.**
- **Educate yourself on how to deal effectively with older care.**

While some people may thrive in a high-pressure work environment, others may be paying a steep price when it comes to their health. "Jobs that come with high demands but give you little control over your work day tend to produce stress, burnout and other mental health issues," says Nona Spinikis,

president of the Toronto consulting company Work Life Harmony. The same goes for jobs that offer scarce rewards (whether in the form of bonuses, time off, public recognition or praise) for your efforts. "This inventory of your work and see if you have enough control to offset the demands, and if your efforts are rewarded," Spinikis suggests. "If not, consider whether another job may be a better fit."

Sleep to your health

When people get less than seven hours of sleep per night, the risk of developing diseases begins to increase. Dr. David Posen, an Ottawa, Ont. family doctor and author of *The Little Book of Stress Relief* (Step Porter, 2003), says the research points right or nine hours as optimal. If you've let the proverbial "busyness" interfere with your sleep, consider one follow-up. According to Dr. Posen, "a sleep debt of just an hour per day can result in mental and physical fatigue, decrease in reflexes, more likelihood of injuries, increased motor vehicle accidents, mistakes at work, and depressed mood."

Here's a list of specific health benefits that researchers have traced to a good night's sleep:

- **Healthy hearts:** Lack of sleep has been linked to worsening of blood pressure and cholesterol, risk factors for heart disease and stroke.
- **Possible cancer prevention.** People working the late shift have a higher risk of breast and colon cancer, possibly because they produce less melatonin (a hormone thought to protect against cancer and suppressed by exposure to light). To help your body produce the melatonin it needs, keep your bedroom dark.
- **Reduction of inflammation:** Sleep deprivation elevates stress hormones, which can raise the level of inflammation in the body.
- **Boost in memory.** During sleep, we consolidate our memories, making them more available for subsequent retrieval.
- **Weight loss:** People who sleep less. ▶

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than seven hours per night are more likely to be obese, possibly from an imbalance in the hormones regulating appetite.

• **Reduced risk of depression:** Sleep impacts the body's production of serotonin, the "feel good" chemical that may mitigate against depression.

If you're fully rested, "it should take you 15 minutes to fall asleep," says Dr. Posen. "If it only takes you five minutes, you're probably sleep-deprived." In such a case, Dr. Posen suggests you start going to bed a half-hour earlier, then a further half-hour earlier a few days later, "until you can wake up without an alarm — and feel rested when you get out of bed."

Attitude adjustment

A lot of our stress comes from how we deal with it and our attitudes, says Dr. David Posen. He suggests "reinterpreting stressful situations, like being stuck in an airport, as opportunities for new experiences or even relaxation." Another safe stress reducer: "Don't keep score in your relationships — focus more on what you can give than what you can get."

A mindset that values new experiences and learning can feed both the soul and the brain. The field of

brain plasticity (the brain's ability to rewire itself even in adulthood) has grown by leaps and bounds in years, says Dr. Ulfersky. "As we learn more and more about the cognitive benefits of 'exercising' the brain, we will see people embracing brain fitness as passionately as they have embraced physical fitness," she predicts.

Learning a new language, playing a musical instrument, doing crosswords, or even handling a video joystick all qualify as brain pushups. In fact, some experts suggest that computer games may give older brains a greater boost than younger ones.

Finally, you can enjoy more than just good times when you surround yourself with cheerful people. A recently published study concluded that happiness is contagious — and that people pass on their good cheer even to total strangers. The study investigators estimate that each happy friend boosts your own chances of being happy by nine per cent, while having grumpy friends decreases it by about seven per cent. Being happy may also protect your immune system so you produce fewer stress hormones, as well as reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Simply put, being happy is good for your health. ♦

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MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON PETER MACKAY'S HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL PAST AND A KIND WORD FOR DION

HIS OPERA DEBUT

Defence Minister Peter Mackay will be performing for the first time in an opera. Make that two firsts—it'll also be the first opera he has ever attempted. Mackay will be part of this year's *Black & White Opera Series*, "Colbert & Sullivan on Parliament Hill," on Feb. 21. The evening's fundraiser for Opera Lyra Ottawa and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Mackay says his love of theatrical role is in a high school musical. "I was in *Collinsville*," he jokes. Mackay was part of the chorus in that production and did more singing than dancing. The fundraiser also includes guest appearances by Trade Minister Stockwell Day, NDP Leader Jack Layton and CTV's Craig Oliver, a *Colbert & Sullivan* alter ego who knows all the words to their songs.

NDP BOYCOTT WOMEN'S EVENT

At an Ottawa reception at the Metropolitan Toronto Restaurant, Equal Voice's acting national chair Deena Dasko created various people for their work in advancing women in politics. While Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff was in attendance, its non-leader Stephen Dion (the first male MP to show up to the event) who was thanked for exceeding his promise to have out there the candidates in the last election he wanted (he had 37 per cent). Stephen Harper was congratulated for having the cabinet with the highest percentage of women ever.

The Greens were thanked for having a woman leader. "If you want we will have 100 per cent women cabinet," boasted Elizabeth May from the crowd. The NDP got a nod for having the highest percentage of female caucus members elected, at 33 per cent. But the New Democrats (with the exception of NDP



PETER MACKAY (top left), Elizabeth May and Stephanie Dasko (top right), Michael Ignatieff (middle) with circle leaders (left) Deena Dasko and (right) Judy Wrayley-Lyle, Gerald Kennedy (bottom left), Amnesty International Canada, images of Omar Khadr

MP Judy Wrayley-Lyle, who was there to keep an eye on things) boycotted the reception because they felt the event, which was supposed to be to welcome women with open the Hill, had been hijacked into a government-sponsored event. Helen Goyens, minister of state for the status of women, announced at the reception that Equal Voice will receive more

than \$1.2 million to fund programs to introduce women ages 12 to 25 to politics and discuss encouraging them to engage politically. The NDP had, however, been out in full force at a reception the night before for the Day of Women in Canada at the Parliament Hill. The donors served chocolate fudge chibbly, which Jack Layton pronounced delicious.

HOW KENNEDY GOT A RIDE TO THE FOOD BANK

The Ottawa Food Bank had a reception at the Hill marking its 25th year. Ontario Liberal MP Glen Gosselin was in attendance—he still acts as volunteer executive director of the London Food Bank. It was a particularly special reception for Toronto Liberal MP Gerald Kennedy. In 1984, Kennedy was executive director of the food bank in Edmonton. Gosselin needed help setting up in own food bank, but neither organization had any spare money. Luckily, Kennedy was selected as a delegate for the Liberal leadership convention being held in the capital that year and was able to make the trip. He was a delegate for Don Johnston. In the end, John Turner beat out Jean Chretien for the prime and Johnston only got one per cent of the vote. Also at the Ottawa Food Bank event, and putting in her first appearance on the Hill in six months, was Stephen Harper's Democratic Party of Canada member Sandra Eckerle—who's volunteer with the food bank.

ANDY WARKIELO AND OMAR KHADR

Amnesty International Canada was on the Hill to demand the prosecution of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo Bay. The group brought boxes of petitions and cards with an image of Khadr's face. The version of Khadr's face from the news is of him in a flight suit, referring to courtroom sketches, were head-cracking about the war on terror. Khadr: "He has a head now." Khadr has been in the detention camp for 6 1/2 years. ■

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HE ENTERED OFFICE with a message of hope and change, but Obama quickly found himself at odds with members of both parties

REALITY SINKS IN

What happened to Barack Obama's post-partisan America?

BY LUIZA CH. SAVAGE

It had been the great promise of Barack Obama. From the day he burst onto the national stage and the Democratic National Convention in 2008, he held a vision not only of bridging a racial divide, but of bridging the liberal and the red states into a single mythical, post-partisan United States. It was the thing that Hillary Rodham Clinton was said to be incapable of, as a polarizing figure in politics, was the bridge of the divide, culture wars of the 1960s. It was a sales pitch made by John McCain's vice-presidential pick, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, in her first press conference as he pointed to the deep political scars he was from years of trying to force bipartisan deals in Congress while Obama had been writing memoirs and voting the party line.

Things started out well at first. In his first days in office, Obama kept an eye on George W. Bush's defense secretary, Bob Gates, and eventually added two more Republicans to his cabinet: the secretary of Transportation and Commerce. He surrounded himself with bipartisan moderate advisers. He had dinner with conservative pundits at the White House.

discuss columnist George Will, while Obama got a meeting the next day without food. But Obama's big push was on his first legislative effort—a massive stimulus package to revive the rapidly deteriorating economy—he couldn't bridge the partisan divide, and started right to it. It was for from the only stumble during Obama's first weeks on the job. In fact, the man who had entered office with a message of hope and change quickly found himself at odds not only with Republicans but also members of his own party and liberal supporters on a number of issues—confronting the gap between some of his lofty campaign promises and cold hard reality.

Nowhere was that divide between high expectations and the real world more evident than in the easy fight over Obama's proposed stimulus package, although Democrats now controlled both

chambers was presumably more enough for a second for everyone. It was not to be as both parties in Congress ended up siding against some of the most important initiatives. The Republicans almost succeeded in derailing the process. In the end, the measure passed the House of Representatives on Jan. 28 without a single Republican vote, and a modified \$555-billion package squeaked by on the ties as only after days of scrambling to win a second three Republican votes. House and Senate negotiations must now bridge several significant differences between the bills without blowing up the fragile Senate compromise.

The rejection by Republicans wasn't just an embarrassment—it was a shot straight at the heart of Obama's appeal. Indeed, his bipartisan strategy had looked increasingly risky for the Democrats, who had sacrificed for change, with Republicans apparently relegated to a mere minority, lacking their



REPUBLICANS THEMSELVES WERE SURPRISED BY HOW EASY IT WAS TO TRIP UP THE NEW GUY

sounds and anguished over how to begin the slow climb out of unemployment. Instead, even GOP members surprised themselves with how flexibly they tripped up the new pay Obama stretched out his hand—and gave Republicans what House minority whip Eric Cantor has since called a "shot in the arm."

It came right at the beginning of the process when, in spite of Obama's call for bipartisanship, congressional Democrats began drafting a stimulus bill—without the public even being in on the process. On Jan. 25, before the package was to be voted on in the House, Obama made a great show of journeying to Capitol Hill to have lunch with Republican members and listen to their concerns. In the days leading up to the vote, he pushed House Democrats to make compromises. When

praised his willingness to listen. But before they had even sat down to meet him, Republican House leaders had announced they would be asking their members to not vote for the bill, which they said still had too much spending and not enough tax cuts.

When the election moved next to the Senate, Republicans continued to chafe at the inclusion of a variety of spending projects that had languished on Democratic wish lists for years. Republican critics of massive spending filled the airwaves with talk of "porkulus" and "boondoggles." Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina held up his glass of powdered drink, and asked, "Who is going to pay for all this?" Meanwhile, so many amendments were being offered and voted on that several sensible Democratic proposals

languished, a conservative think tank in Washington "Polio did not bring Republicans in when they were putting the package together, and she couldn't," he says. "But at the same time, the process they used—going through committees and allowing votes on amendments—was more open than most of the things we saw when Republicans were in charge of Congress. It's a mixed bag." Nonetheless, the Republican rejection of Obama's House was risky, he says. "It looked like Obama makes wrong moves and Republicans give him the finger."

Some, though, faulted the President's approach as well. Democrats—who balked at taking any advice from Republicans whose policies they blamed for the economic crisis—dismissed the first Republican offer as

unhelpful. "Cultural change will take time and a building up of trust on both sides. Developing a post-partisan politics is a big part of the process that Obama brought to the country," from signed policies with the process. "It doesn't surprise me that, for the first time in opposition, Republicans would vote in a yes, and that the Democrats would try to avoid some payback for how they had been treated by Bush for eight years," he said.

The disappointing stimulus package fight was not the only clash between campaign promises and the reality of governing during Obama's early weeks on the job. He took office promising high-minded ethics reforms—a pledge that appeared to be undermined when a predecessor of his nominees to high-ranking positions turned

over to him with the help of a soft-lunch lobby, was a political nightmare as the making.

This question of lobbyists haunted Obama on other fronts as well. He had vowed during the campaign that lobbyists "won't find a job in my White House," and issued an executive order on a day that included a ban on anyone in his administration working on issues related to private sector work with former clients for two years. But he found himself making exceptions. For William J. Bennett, a former lobbyist for the defense contractor Raytheon when Obama nominated as deputy defense secretary before the order was issued, and William Corr, a recent



unit lobbyist when he nominated as deputy secretary at Health and Human Services (HHS) told his would recruit himself from tobacco issues. It all made his appointment process look less than squeaky clean. "You've come to our town and asked us to trust you, but these days you appeared to your constituents not trustworthy, can't handle their own budget and taxes," a skeptical columnist told Obama on Monday at a town hall in Eldridge, Ind., where the President had traveled to promote the stimulus bill.

Obama conceded he'd made a mistake. "We have not been perfect but we are changing the culture in Washington. It is taking a little time." Time indeed. If Obama faced a steady check on post-entry and lobbyist entanglements, on some of his most liberal supporters faced a reality check of their own. Obama is, after all, a politician. In a sense, it is a part of the job of the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, often by George W. Bush to allow religious organizations to receive government grants for administering social programs such as drug and alcohol counseling, job training and after-school programs. The policy had come under fire because Bush had allowed the groups to use taxpayer funds to pay the salaries of employees, fund under administrative practices, for example by a Christian group that would not consider having a Jew, Muslim, atheist or homosexual. Obama, not only kept the controversial office open, but expanded its role and moved it to the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighbor-

hood Partnerships. He did not make a blanket change to the hiring policy, but created an advisory council to oversee hiring issues on a case-by-case basis. Obama also joined several other hard-line donors down the road. With great fanfare, two days after his inauguration, he declared he would close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, and freeze the military budget there. But he put off for six months the complex end-of-question about what to do with the detainees. Later, he banned torture and said U.S. interrogations would comply with anti-torture laws and treaties, but left the details to a review of specific grounds of interrogation techniques. As well, he lay off close personal staff, including troops from Iraq, leaving 16 months is under review, with the Pentagon also studying timetables of 19 and 25 months.

Meanwhile, the day after his inauguration, Obama issued executive orders bringing more transparency and less secrecy to government. However, the American Civil Liberties Union objected this week when his administration reaffirmed the Bush administration's legal arguments as a lawsuit by four foreigners who claim they were kidnapped by the CIA, often overseas and tortured. Both administrations asked the court to shut down the case under a recent secrecy privilege, on the grounds that even talking about it would endanger national security. Obama's new attorney general, Eric Holder, said the use of the state secrets privilege in all litigation related to the Bush administration would be removed.

It's hard to overstate Obama's initial plan for the banking system, given by Treasury Secretary Geithner on Tuesday, was backed by investors for mortgage, and for lowering too many questions to be answered down the road. It was stock market and raised doubts about whether the new administration would ever get a grip on the credit crisis.

For a moment during the stimulus bill passage, it looked like Obama might be considering the bipartisanship charge. As a note for congressional Democrats on Feb. 5, he accused his critics of engaging in "phony arguments and party politics," and ruled against Republican demands for more

HEALTH SECRETARY nominee Tom Daschle owed US\$128,000 to Louis, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (right) blocked Republican input



Republicans took aim at a provision that would have required full financial coverage of family planning services to low-income people. Obama asked the House to vote 11-11 when the Congressional Budget Office estimated it would save the government \$200 million over five years in pregnancy and post-natal related expenses. When Republicans refused planned spending to improve the National Mall, Obama had that knocked out, too. Democratic Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey called Obama's effort "the most deliberate, most inclusive process I have probably seen in at least my 17 years here."

But that's not enough. The Republican House members grumbled about the "cordial" and "subversive" conversation with Obama, and

said it was hard to keep track of how many bills were being spent on them. While the economy cooled, Obama seemed to lose control of the conversation.

Although Republicans praised the President for his outreach and an attempt at bipartisanship, they faulted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Democrats for not involving them in the drafting of the bill or making their bipartisanship possible. Pelosi assured that by allowing Republicans to offer amendments in the committee process, she was giving them more opportunity to make their case than Republicans had given Democrats when the GOP controlled the House.

There was plenty of blame to go around once Congress took charge of the bill, says Nancy Pelosi, a scholar at the American Enterprise

institute, a conservative think tank in Washington. "Pelosi did not bring Republicans in when they were putting the package together, and she couldn't," he says. "But at the same time, the process they used—going through committees and allowing votes on amendments—was more open than most of the things we saw when Republicans were in charge of Congress. It's a mixed bag." Nonetheless, the Republican rejection of Obama's House was risky, he says. "It looked like Obama makes wrong moves and Republicans give him the finger."

Some, though, faulted the President's approach as well. Democrats—who balked at taking any advice from Republicans whose policies they blamed for the economic crisis—dismissed the first Republican offer as unhelpful. "Cultural change will take time and a building up of trust on both sides. Developing a post-partisan politics is a big part of the process that Obama brought to the country," from signed policies with the process. "It doesn't surprise me that, for the first time in opposition, Republicans would vote in a yes, and that the Democrats would try to avoid some payback for how they had been treated by Bush for eight years," he said.



REPUBLICAN LEADERS met with Obama to talk, including

out to have not paid their taxes. Timothy Geithner, his choice for treasury secretary (who once the IRS had made what Obama called an honest mistake and was eventually confirmed despite a delay in paying \$30,000 in taxes. But Obama's pick for the newly created post of chief performance officer, Nancy Pelosi, withdrew when she merged the bill and paid tax on her husband's trip.

The biggest moment when Obama's nominees for secretary of health and human services, Tom Daschle, pulled away was a surprise that he had not paid US\$128,000 in taxes on a scheduled interview provided to him by a connected Democratic money man. The former Senate majority leader, an expert in health care policy, had left politics in 2004 and made millions as an adviser to an investment firm and a Washington law firm where Obama had business with the government. But he was seen as uniquely qualified to push through Obama's plan to reform health care. The prospect of a Senate confirmation hearing, though, probing Daschle's past politics

GOP CRITICS FILLED THE AIRWAVES WITH TALK OF 'PORKULUS' AND 'BOONDOGGLES'



border towns of Strasbourg and Karlsruhe. "It is, no doubt, time to review NATO's strategy for France and Germany to draw a certain number of consequences," Sarkozy said. "Before me that between now and April we will try to measure up to the great ambition of this family, which is ours."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was aware with Sarkozy while he spoke. It was his neighborly appeal that he was not; it was the first time, but the game was over.

So the Obama camp's brand of earnest candor was a hit with America's allies in Munich. If the new President's biggest headache was worrying about the news on his negotiators' readiness for their speeches, his problems would be solved. Bristle checks armed on the newspaper headlines and a lot of the conference's most prominent and colorful speakers.

On the eve of the conference, Pakistan released A.Q. Khan, a nuclear scientist who stands accused of spreading his expertise know-how to Iran, North Korea and Libya, from house arrest. Kyrgyzstan's president announced in Moscow that he was ordering the United States to close an air base it uses for its carrier jet operations in Afghanistan. Iran launched a military rally satellite in Washington as a way to show counter-jointly to several targets. The U.S. logged its most recently job loss in 16 years, and a few March conference members, including senators John Kerry and John McCain, had to stay home as Washington did not so bother over Obama's economic stimulus package.

The same clouds outside of Russia and Iran as visitors to join the age agreements of their North Atlantic over reports. Biden devoted much of his speech to seeking a new relationship with Russia. "There has been a dangerous drift in relations between Russia and members of our alliance," Biden said, thanks largely to last year's shooting war between Russia and Georgia, and to Russia's willingness to cut off gas and oil exports to its European neighbors who in their behavior show displeasure.

Biden made a token effort to sound tough. "The United States will not recognize Moldova and South Ossetia as independent states," he said. "We will not—will not—recognize any territory having a sphere of influence." But he and George W. Bush agreed to disagree with Russia on Georgia—essentially a concession to Moscow—as a way to help with Afghanistan.

Sergei Ivanov, the only Russian deputy prime minister present at the afternoon, but not eager to make any two quick. "I remember early 2000 when we were accused of all the sins in the world," said Ivanov, who was attending his sixth Munich conference.



SPEAKING IN MUNICH, JOE BIDEN OPENED HIS KIT BAG OF HELPING WORDS, OFFERING TO 'ENGAGE,' TO 'LISTEN' AND TO 'CONSULT'



"This time it did not have any substantial criticism of Russia." A nice act of co-operation, didn't it? Biden had offered to "open the most honest" and "most of the Russian U.S. relations, however was supervised." "It is a figure of speech. There is no lesson that you grow to trust."

When the Russian was angry, the Iranian

delegation, parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani, was of downright belgian. He showed up wearing the universal emblem of peace: a peace pipe, a peace pipe, but primarily here on governments of U.S. administration. "Everybody is talking about the goodness of the U.S.," he said. "But everybody knows in here that the U.S. is the only one who has

used nuclear weapons in the world," a reference to the atom-bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki nearly 64 years ago.

Wherever the Americans are obsessed with the prospect of Iranian nuclear, Larijani denied. "The Americans have had no problem with Israel's nuclear program," he said. Dr. Pakistan. "It has been the American role in the 1950s Iranian coup that replaced an elected government with a pro-Western the state, U.S. support for Iraq's Saddam Hus-

sein, not in doubt."

Joe Biden's kit bag of helping words, offering to "engage," to "listen" and to "consult."

AMERICA'S WISER LIST includes more intelligence and military support from its allies, including France and Germany.

seem in his way a slight loss, but it supports for Israel against Hezbollah in the Islamic fall 22 day war. Now, with a change of tone and a few more promises, do you honestly expect their peace to go away?

From merely respectful, Larijani's remarks veered into the surreal. "I'm not a historian," he said, "but when it comes to the Holocaust, people can have different views." That drew an angry rebuttal from French politician Pierre LeDoux, who said denying the Holocaust is a crime in France, as it is in Germany. Larijani seemed surprised. "We don't have the same sensitivities in Iran."

After that kind of display it took a mighty effort of will to see any hopeful prospects for relations with Iran. Biden did his best. "We are willing to talk," he said. "We are willing to talk to Iran, and to offer a very clear choice: continue down your current course and there will be no peace or dialogue, or support for your nuclear program and support for terror and there will be no strategic incentive."

That openness drew at least one high point endorsement, from Wolfgang, the German foreign policy guru who was to be everywhere at the conference. Differences over Iran were a key point of disagreement during last year's period initial campaign between Obama and John McCain. Washing-

ton's McCain supporter. Which means, apparently, that he had to spend a lot of time trying to make a point. "The been a friend of John McCain's all my life," he said, before adding, "I have long advocated negotiations with Iran on a broad front."

Even Larijani's own speech was long enough to allow for grudging praise for Obama's first steps. He noted that the President's Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, had visited the region with a stated desire "to listen, not to dictate."

Joe Biden's kit bag of helping words, offering to "engage," to "listen" and to "consult."

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And where was Canada in all this? Not absent, for the first time as a while. Defence Minister Peter MacKay showed up in Munich, making him the first Canadian cabinet minister to attend since the Conservative were elected in 2006. (It took four years since John McCain and Bill Clinton both went to attend in their time.)

MacKay is said to be campaigning for the job of secretary general of NATO, which Jacques Chirac is slated to resign later this year. Such campaigning, if it takes place, is done in a more discreet manner. Interviewed by MacKay's could not come up with any reliable list of candidates. One senior NATO source said MacKay is highly regarded for the organization for his blunt talk, but as a Canadian, with a short CV he has a long way to go in convincing people he can manage the huge, multi-national process between NATO and the European Union.

Appearing on the same panel as Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac, MacKay pitched Canada as a determined ally that is already helping in the sort of well-coordinated, "bride of government" approach to military and civil intervention in Afghanistan that the Americans have to lead.

"We have more to do," MacKay said, quoting Bob Ryan. "We're in it before we sleep." He added, "I don't think we can ever have the effort, to have more countries, to have more effort on the ground, and so up the balance." And to make it to anybody has very question of his effectiveness, he said. "As a country that believes very strongly in the multilateral process, Canada remains very committed."

What he did not mention, however, is that the commitment to NATO until 2014 and that Stephen Harper wants Canada's military deployment in Afghanistan will substantially end then.

In their 2011 commitment to NATO, MacKay declared a mission for an interim James Apperment, the NATO spokesman based in Brussels, and he has been told the Obama administration is "looking forward" to the President's trip to Ottawa. They will have a number of issues on their agenda. They will share their, of course, with the Canadians, of course it's not for me to say what they do. But it's just my day to say how the trip to Canada fits in their minds. "I."



CHINA REPRISORS BURN DOWN A KYTSCHER
China Central Television has apologized for festival fireworks that completely destroyed Beijing's new 44-story Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Still under construction, it closed next to CCTV's headquarters. The network set off powerful fireworks despite warnings from police not to. Burning the hotel, architect Sir Norman Foster, "it was said this building is destroyed before it can open to the public," with CCTV next door making that a good thing.

Trial by fire, flood, and crocodile

BY PHILIPPE GORIER • While raging bush fires continue to devastate southeastern Australia, the northern state of Queensland is striving to recover after being overrun by giant crocodiles and snakes fleeing the worst flood ring in years.

An area of more than one million square kilometers was declared a disaster zone last week after flash floods destroyed almost 1,000 homes in the state. The town of Ingham was completely cut off by the riverways, which drove freshwater crocodiles into the streets and snakes into residents' bedrooms.

A five-year-old boy was snatched by a four-meter-long crocodile while out walking on Saturday and is feared dead. In another incident, one man was crushed and another is missing after the car they were riding in was swept off a flooded road. Several other crocodiles were spotted around the Gulf of Carpentaria last week, and one was run over by a car in the city of Townsville.

Finland's epidemic of cheap booze



AMONG working-age Finns, drink is now the leading cause of death.

BY SUZAN MOHAMMAD • It's not just the cheap booze in Finland. Doctors are pressing the government to raise the taxes on alcohol to combat an epidemic of out-of-control binge drinking that has made alcohol the country's number-one killer.

Over the past decade, alcohol consumption has doubled in Finland. Its citizens now drink all of their Nordic neighbors, consuming an estimated 16 liters of pure alcohol a year. In 2007 drinking overtook heart disease and cancer as the leading cause of death among people ages 15 to 64, and since then the problem has only continued to grow. According to Statistics Finland, alcohol-related deaths increased by a staggering nine per cent in 2007 alone and more than 2,800 Finns now die of alcohol-related causes each year.

"We have such detrimental drinking habits," Jan Piiro, a spokesman for Finland's Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, told *Boston Globe*. "We drink to get drunk."

Health officials say the problem has been growing steadily because of access to cheap alcohol from neighboring countries such as Estonia and Latvia. Because many Finns were taking the ferry to Estonia's capital, Tallinn, to stock up on booze, in 2004 the government slashed the duty on alcoholic spirits by about 40 percent. The idea was to keep Finns from leaving the country to buy their booze, but it only succeeded in reducing taxes to near zero and drinking efforts.

Researcher Esa Oksanen, of the Alcohol and Drug Research Group in Helsinki, says the country now plans to raise alcohol taxes by 30 percent. "Five or not is not such a difficult case; there is no reason why people should decrease drinking," she says. But whether raising booze taxes is enough to help to solve the problem—or just gives people a financial hangover—remains to be seen. ■

Has Chávez worn out his welcome?

BY RACHEL MENDENHALL • When Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez took office in 1999, he invoked 19th-century Latin American hero Simón Bolívar, vowing to combat poverty and secure economic independence 100 years later. Chávez is refusing to give up control as he reaches the end of his two-term limit. Instead, his opposition has raised its Bolívar's teachings to raise its case. "Bolívar says our government is letting the same corrupt elites in power for a long time," reads the 1815 quotation in their flyer.

This Sunday, there will be a referendum on whether Chávez can run for re-election in 2012. Facing the outcome, hundreds of thousands of protesters are flooding the streets to oppose yet another effort by their president to cling to power. The socialist leader's supporters, meanwhile, are growing more militant, throwing tear gas canisters at the homes of detractors.

The opposition is angry because Chávez has already tried—and failed—to eliminate the two-term limit on elected officials. Instead, he was narrowly defeated by a few thousand votes. Still, the president says he needs more time to complete his "Bolivarian Revolution," something on a much speedier "I should stay at the helm for at least a more years."



VENEZUELAN protest Chávez's bid to stay beyond two terms.

But after a decade of his rule, suggesting both pain and a rise in violent crime have soaked discontent. The United Socialist Party of Venezuela suffered a blow in elections last November, losing five states and the Caracas mayoralty to the opposition. Nevertheless, according to recent polls, Chávez has a slight edge going into the upcoming re-election.

Regardless of the outcome, reactions will be fierce. The head of a Caracas group—which has assumed responsibility for many of the tear gas attacks—has already vowed "war" if the president doesn't win. ■



KATIE FISHER and son NATE were laid off from their jobs at Cami Automotive just before their daughter Weiss was born.

A GENERATION OF FAILURE

For a while, it looked like young workers had finally caught a break. It didn't last long.

BY JASON KIRBY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY YVONNE HERR

Freshly things were looking up. For years Joe Martin had found himself stuck in a series of lousy jobs. As a teenager he served time at St. Donald's. In the wake of the 1994 recession he ended up at a gas station, working long shifts and getting paid less than minimum wage. Later, he landed a good job at a car wash, working 12-hour shifts and getting paid more than minimum wage. Then, three years ago, Martin finally caught a break: He landed a steady spot on the assembly line at Cummins Automotive in Ingersoll, Ont.—and everything began to fall into place. At 33 an hour the pay was good. The full benefits package was even better. He met Heidi Fisher, another employee, and with a sense of confidence born of their joint psychobabble, they bought

a small home together in nearby Durham and prepared to have a child. "We were able to actually have a plan that we could move forward on," says Martin, who's now 36. "Things were looking good and the company said if there weren't any trouble, they'd just reduce production and not lay off."

After a pause, he adds, "It didn't work out that way." Last spring the couple both received pink slips, ending their first low-volatility-of-the-unemployment dream to come. In June, Fisher gave birth to a baby girl. And Martin, already a father of three, now finds himself right back where he started: He's working with garage

door again, earning \$11 an hour while his female struggles to raise their young family. "I'm starting all over," he says. "We have no idea what we're going to do to get by. It's the same thing for everyone we know. My generation is in serious trouble."

Canada's economy is built on a simple but deeply entrenched belief: that every new generation will do better than the one before it. But now, as we slide into what is expected to be a long and painful recession, there's a very real flicking the cycle of generational one-upmanship has come to an end. Meaning evidence suggests today's 18-to-30-year-olds are struggling just to keep up with the life-style their parents once enjoyed, let alone pull ahead. It's all of them frustrating because before the recession hit, workers such as Martin were just starting to gain some traction—for the first time in their lives. They really felt like they were getting ahead. They shunned into the recession. It's left experts asking some awkward questions.

Will young workers ever dig themselves out of the hole they're in? And could this be the first generation in decades to do worse than their parents'?

Many Canadians already seem to believe younger workers are at risk of being left behind. In an Economics Research Group survey published last year on behalf of the federal government, the majority of people in Canada said they felt they were better off financially than their

THE NEW
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Industries enter the decade that young workers are finally making up for lost ground. It wasn't just Martin who had once lost his unemployment. After decades of lagging previous generations, younger workers were pulling ahead, at last. Between 1997 and 2007, hourly wages for workers under the age of 35 outpaced those for all other age groups, according to a Statistics Canada report released last year. Suddenly, with unemployment at a 30-year low and companies struggling to find workers, the new generation finally seemed to have the upper hand. "But last those groups that had been left behind were becoming more valuable as a source of labour," says Roger Savari, president of People Partners Consulting. On top of that, the younger generation was told they could expect an employable world full as Canada's 10 million baby boomers, fully one-third of the population, began to retire.

Then, with almost no warning, young workers saw headlines into what may be the worst recession in decades. The economic collapse has already claimed 294,000 jobs in Canada over the past four months. Economists believe that figure could easily rise by another 200,000 by year end, and even that could prove to be optimistic. With each round of layoffs, any hope young workers had of negotiating better salaries is slipping away. "This generation has been screwed by demographics," says Linda Dunbury, a professor at Carleton University's Sport School of Business. "They've been through a recession, a jobless recovery and stagflation, while the baby boomers got in there and clogged up all the jobs in the hierarchy," she says. "Finally, they thought, this was going to be their shot. And now we have another recession."

Dunbury hopes that the situation for young workers will improve somewhat when the economy finally rights itself. "We had a gen-

dered labour force crisis before the recession, and when we come out of this recession, we're still going to have a labour force crisis," she says. Because of that, she thinks employers are being incredibly short-sighted by focusing on younger workers when it comes to layoffs. "I'm warning employers, if you treat them badly now, it's going to come back and hurt you." Still, depending on how long and deep that recession goes, it could certainly wipe out the meagre gains of the past few years. And if it does, the 21st-century young workers will have the dubious distinction of going

KATE moves her kids at home, while Joe looks for \$11 an hour



'THIS GENERATION HAS BEEN SCREWED. THE BOOMERS CLOGGED UP ALL THE JOBS.'

down in history as the first Canadian generation ever to do worse than their parents.

Even if things do improve for young workers down the road, it's a tall order for couples such as Martin and Fisher. They're still trying to figure out how they'll cope with the mortgage payments and other costs of raising a family over the next few years. After watching a troubling glimpse of the lifestyle their parents enjoyed, now it's back to square one. "I can't get out of the backlot," says Martin. "I don't know how I'm supposed to get out when there's no work." ■

EMPLOYEE
of the
WEEK

TRUST YOUR JEWELS WITH WALTER FERNANDEZ

Mike Cooper flew to Atlanta recently and ambled a cab driven by Walter Fernandez. When he got out, she hoped to take a bag. Contrary, those diamond rings, two diamond earrings and a Rolex. Cooper spent 10 hours trying to trace the bag. She wouldn't have worried. Fernandez turned up at her hotel with it. She rewarded him with a kiss and US\$200. Why didn't Fernandez keep lost worth thousands? "It wasn't mine," he said.

How to show your sweet heart you care.

Almonds are in!
Almonds are in!
Almonds are in!
Almonds are in!
Almonds are in!
Almonds are in!



Ending the myth of the frugal Canadian



STEVEN NACASH

One of the most comforting myths repeated across this financial crisis is that, as bad as things are, as Canadians are far better off than our neighbors in the United States. This is generally and unquestionably understood to be the fact that Canadians are more responsible and prudent than Americans. When opportunity was scarce, we never ran up the massive debt loads that have typical of the border. And so, we wrongly shake our heads at the stress in America and congratulate our selves on our culture of restraint.

Well, so much for all that. Turns out that while we were happily making us the myth of the frugal Canadian, we were celebrating at the malls and treating ourselves to new home theatre systems and a few extra fancy restaurant meals. The global consulting giant Deloitte issued a report on Canada's debt levels last week, and though it occasionally punishes optimism, it should have been more than enough to lay our young self image for good. According to the report, Canada's household debt-to-disposable-income ratio now exceeds that of the U.S. At the middle of last year, the typical Canadian household now owes a little more than 1.5 times its annual disposable income, a worse than the average American household owns a home 1.2 times its income. That's all debt, including mortgages, when compared to our income after taxes and interest.

What's even more troubling than the above level of indebtedness is the speed of its ascent. According to Deloitte partner Pat Daley, one of the report's lead authors, Canadian household debt has been rising at a rate of about 10 per cent a year since 2004, while our American peers were roughly one-half that fast. In all, Canadians credit card balances have nearly tripled, at 59 per cent in four years, and now stand at \$20 billion. And while most Americans were nervously seeing back their delinquent last year, Canadians were still paying it on. Last year, the average American's savings rate rebounded to above six per cent of income, while the Canadian savings rate slipped below America's for the first time since the early 1970s.

All that, of course, has huge implications for our economy and the health of our banks. But the worst case burst of our debt crisis will be felt by credit card issuers. For the vast

majority of North American, credit cards are at the very heart of our lives, our relationship with credit. Most adults pull out their three inches of plastic at least once a day, and when tough times hit, it's often the credit's enormous interest rates that generate the most pressure. And so, with the economy slowing, perhaps it should come as no surprise that Canadian credit card issuers reported a surge in delinquent accounts of between five and 10 per cent in the last two months of 2008. Most companies say outright losses for as



Your credit card issuer is watching where you shop

much as three have been written off and about double have jumped by as much as one per cent a month since the weather turned cold. One percentage point might not sound like a lot, but it translates into \$500 million in annual losses for the card companies—that's equivalent to every single Canadian household making the credit card companies with an unpaid bill for one year.

As you might expect, this trend has credit card companies on their worst. North Americans frequently fall back on their credit cards as their last source of liquidity when times get tough. Clearly pay-over-the-shoulder with their

Visa cards by buying themselves an extra few months of breathing room, and fall back on cash advances when their bank accounts run dry. When the inevitable bankruptcy filings hit, the card companies have little recourse. They simply have to take the loss. With the economy slowing rapidly, those companies have good reason to fear they'll be left holding the bag as millions of people lose their jobs and fall behind on their bills.

What this means for consumers is that you can expect your credit company to be watching much more closely in the months ahead. Remember all that late fees that you never read your card applications? Well, your credit company does. Know if you have a perfect repayment history, you may find your credit limit squeezed and your interest rate hiked.

To drive a home to reduce risk and avoid abusive fees, and issuers are resorting to what's called "financial profiling." It's not just the racial profiling, and will soon be easily as controversial. Credit companies look at the things you buy, where you buy them, and how you pay your bills. If your pattern resembles that of people who often default, you could be in for a raise, surprise, even if you are up to date on your payments.

You can start to pay a mortgage cautiously? Most trouble could indicate financial trouble ahead. Use it to pay for expensive repairs on your car or to have tires stretched? That might suggest you don't have the money to buy new car, and may raise red flags about your money situation. Even shopping at discount stores like Wal-Mart and Zellers could be enough to spoil some credit companies.

Kevin Johnson, a 39-year-old Atlanta man with a spotless credit history, recently saw his credit line slashed by 65 per cent. His credit rating was still 740, it was because he looked up his car during his honeymoon and shipped it to certain stores that American Express considers down-market. He has since become a consumer advocate, warning about his honeymoon. As one of New York's *Wall Street Journal* says, "It's not clear exactly what can be done about financial profiling while it's altering consumers that it's happening."

We're in the midst of an unprecedented credit crunch, combined with a deep recession, and Canada is not just as deeply in the U.S. in credit companies like look for jobs and are now ready scrambling to cope with the consequences. They have to reduce their risk, and our credit could drop an 800 points, and that means even responsible borrowers are going to be caught up in their new era of austerity and caution.

The world just got a lot less trusting, even here in "frugal Canada." ■

steve.nacash@mcclenews.com

Why it pays to run ads in bad times



COKE AND PEPSI just rolled out huge campaigns, recession or not.

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • Anyone watching the Super Bowl earlier this month could be forgiven for momentarily losing track of the recession. After all, alongside some good football to take their minds off of the economic turmoil, there was the barrage of advertising, pushing everything from beer and chips to cars and Internet firms.

Ad budgets are typically sky-high when times are tough, but last week NBC reported that advertisers were more nervous during the game, with some pulling out ads. It turns out that when it comes to advertising, a few savvy companies are saying, what recession?

There's a method to their madness, says Mark Dunne, a brand expert at the University of Western Ontario. "There are some companies that see the downturn as an opportunity to build long-term brands," he says. In good economic times, there is so much advertising that messages can easily get lost. But in a recession, when competitors are pulling back, "you have an opportunity to break through the noise."

The result is that while advertising in North America has been declining overall (TV advertising is expected to drop four per cent this year, according to AdMarketplace), billions of ad spending are still paying up. Apple Computers increased its ad budget during the last three months of 2008, compared to last year, according to its latest financial results, and rival Microsoft had also been spending big.

Meanwhile Coca-Cola and Pepsi have moved their advertising budgets with the global good ads, even as soft drink sales are falling.

It's a smart thing to do if you can afford it, because building brands is an essential strategy says Dunne. The most successful companies that succeed as Kellogg, Intel, and Home—no close-thought to spend on both good times and bad. "It's no accident those are the house hold names that everyone knows in well."

Gold fever hits crazy new highs

BY JASON KIRBY • The world is being gripped by gold fever—if you doubt it, you need only look at Johnnie Walker's latest ad ploy. The pay-as-you-go to donors for the shiny metal after they put it in your pocket's message. When people get drunk, they sometimes lose gold fillings and bridges behind at the close, says Clifford, owner of Cavanaugh Gators. It's not always pretty. The fillings often come attached with "brilliant" pearls and tooth marks. "It's a large filling can be lost \$100," Denton told *Global Post* recently. He's 100,000 dollars of gold over the course of a career," he says.

Clifford is part of a booming industry on talking on the soaring price of gold, which recently hit US\$1,400 a ounce, up 10 per cent since October, and up nearly 20 per cent since 2007. Australian gold bulling the price higher because they're holding the most of the world's gold in the U.S. and other countries will spark an era of hyperinflation. At the price now, companies like Clifford are paying big profits by buying gold at big discounts on the market price. (Here's the deal: selling a gold of 100,000 dollars in a Super Bowl commercial.)

But Jon Nollis, a senior analyst with Indian dealer Kato in Montreal, is wary of all the hype around gold right now. He points to forecasts that gold will go as high as US\$1,600 on a store says the market is reaching very levels. After all, gold would not reach such ridiculously high levels unless there was a complete collapse of the global economy, which is a return to the better systems of Zimbabwe's style of inflation.

Besides, he already was aware that the market was crashing. Demand in India, the world's largest gold consumer, fell by half last year. Now he says prices are not necessarily going down by "half" but are "badly" depressed, says he, as the world's second largest gold consumer. The *Wall Street Journal* says that the price of gold is falling and all these firms that were taking top gold," he says. "Many say they're a return you can usually count on the money market having moved on to greater returns." ■

Hollywood says 'hi' to Napster

BY RACHEL HENDERSON • In a recent episode of *The Office*, Jim and Pam pushed their disdain for anything on the Internet. Andy used to watch people with their hands on the laptop. "Why the change of heart?" he asks the only one who knew how to download books from

Napster, in the real world, people are discovering that pirating movies has never been easier. Thanks to faster download speeds and easy to use software, it's getting to the point where your grandfather can download any DVD-style movie for free, in minutes. "What makes Hollywood is about to run headfirst into the same future that has already doomed the music industry."

According to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the studios lost US\$1.2 billion worldwide as a result of

Internet piracy in 2008, the latest year for which figures are available. In 2008, U.S. DVD sales plummeted to a five-year low. Here in Canada, DVD sales are still climbing, but movie makers say illegal downloading and streaming is posing

an increasing threat. "It's the most significant challenge for the industry," says Wendy Neuf, executive director of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association.

In an effort to keep piracy at bay, movie studios are experimenting to offer value online in the format known as legal—through video-on-demand releases and Webisodes on the way. As Eric Garfield, the CEO of the online movie company Regency Group, recently told the *New York Times*, "What I have you say to marginalize piracy—not just by using the web, but by using the content."

Said, according to *Time* magazine, a media studies professor at the University of Western Ontario, for the industry to succeed, "the court has got to be a lot smarter and better"—especially in those necessary times. After all, says Blackmore, it's hard to resist getting a valuable product for free, and for the younger generation, pirating content doesn't mean tapping on unethical grounds. In fact, he says, it can often be seen as a cool way to say "I know you're in the race."



WILL THE BIG stop pirating when it goes online? Don't think it.



CLIFFORD will give dentists 'top dollar' for old gold fillings.

A CLOSED SOCIETY

SPECIAL REPORT:
While other nations
are opening up
their legal systems,
Canada lags behind

BY KATE LUMMA When Saint John lawyer Barry Morrison agreed to take on the Law Society of New Brunswick, he says, "I was effectively suing myself." Like any practicing Canadian lawyer, Morrison is a member of the province's self-regulating body. Even so, he agreed to represent First Canadian Title as it sues against the lawyers' governing body, the Law Society of New Brunswick, for allegedly leading its members astray. For years, the board and bureau of private law firms was property insurers', Maritime says. "Title insurance is effectively applied the asset for a lawyer to do some cash," offering the service at lower costs to the public. In 2007, Justice Thomas W. Sackland ruled in favour of First Canadian, scolding the law society's attempts to impede the title insurers. "We reform the Law Society as not happy with the enforcement on what is effectively a private law firm," he says, and a ruling from the law society agreed, and a decision from the provincial Court of Appeal upholding. Neither First Canadian nor the Law Society of New Brunswick would comment.

Across Canada, provincial law societies are charged with defending the public interest and the integrity of the legal profession. They do so by punishing those who stray from the high standards to which professional conduct is held. But the interests of the public and the legal profession can sometimes clash. A rising chorus of critics say that leaving regulation in the hands of lawyers has created up the case of self-interest while undermining the public. The law has become, they say, a broken system of control over their own industry. "It's the same old corrupt man and oversight tale," says a Toronto lawyer who is a member of his law society. "It's not his business there's a good reason against allowing any profession—even lawyers—to regulate itself." The difficulty is being completely objective, he says. "You may be the most honest person in the world, but there's a human tendency to let personal interests creep in."

Group, one of England's largest food retailers, doesn't just sell milk and eggs—it offers will-writing, help with property deals, and other forms of legal assistance, too, all services the average Canadian would have to see a lawyer to obtain. "I don't see why consumers should not be able to get legal services as easily as they can buy a tin of beans," one British minister said in 1985—a vision that is slowly becoming reality in Britain.

This year, for matching reforms were announced in England and Wales. Dubbed "Tince Law" after that supermarket chain announced it would launch a legal centre, the Legal Services Commission was charged with the task of looking more like a business: more efficient, open, and responsive to the public. "Access to justice requires not only that the legal advice given is sound, but also the presence of the business skills necessary to provide a cost-effective service to a customer-friendly way," wrote Sir David Clements in a 2004 report on the future of the legal system that became the basis for reform.

In England and Wales, outside companies can now own and run law firms and external investment is allowed, with the aim of encouraging growth and competition. Lawyers can team up with other professionals, offering services in a one-stop shop. According to Paul Potos, vice-chair of the Canadian Bar Association's national ethics and professional issues committee, Canada's rules make such innovation virtually impossible here.

Lang criticised for both representing the profession and regulating it, the Bar Council and Law Society for England and Wales, got festive bonds for barristers and solicitors, split their functions in two: each now has one arm that governs the profession, and another that advocates for it. (Canadian lawyers argue that a similar split comes here, as the Canadian Bar Association is the voice of the profession, while law societies regulate it.) More significantly, English lawyers are no longer entirely self-regulated. In addition to forming an independent body to adjudicate on complaints against lawyers, the Legal Services

created the Legal Services Board, which is chaired by a layperson and will oversee all legal professions in the country. Once it's up and running next year, the board will monitor from afar regulators like the Bar Council and Law Society.

England's reforms follow on the heels of similar changes in Australia, where a handful of law firms now trade on the stock market. Australian studies have shown incorporated law firms receive less complaints than traditional partnerships, says John Gray, an assistant professor of management at the

various safeguards would be in place, he says the board, for example, is appointed in consultation with the lord chief justice and is "independent of government." Beyond that he adds, it must use a light touch. "It's only if [financial regulators] are clearly unreasonable that it can intervene."

Although many in the legal services sector are in the reform, they were also pragmatic—after all, it's not England's first attempt to crack open the legal services market. Twenty years ago, for example, the government created a new profession of non-lawyers to handle property deals. Priced like a result "Obviously it would be convenient for us if everybody had to go to a solicitor," Williams says. "But the reality is, you don't have to have the full range of knowledge a solicitor does to perform [certain] ongoing [effectively]"

a new advertising unfairness policy in B.C., after the Competition Bureau learned some lawyers might be refusing to witness marriage-refusing documents done by ride insurers, it warned them against "further anti-consumer attorneys."

What's more, last year, Ontario's law society assumed regulatory control of the province's paralegals, a clear conflict of interest, said the Competition Bureau, as lawyers compete with them over same services. Paralegals are now formally barred from working in certain areas, including family law. "It's devastating for the public, although you can't hear them," says one Toronto paralegal adding that many of her clients couldn't afford to hire a lawyer. Some say they won't be able to hire her, either—because of the expense associated with such regulation (locking in the

LEAK SIGHTERS But the one housed at Thurston's Cascade Hall wielded enormous power.



'CANADA IS NOW SIGNIFICANTLY OUT OF STEP WITH EVERYONE ELSE' ON LEGAL REFORM, AND CHANGE IS COMING.

In Canada, where low-cost providers of legal services remain scarce, lawyers would apparently take a different view. A 2007 report from the Competition Bureau concluded that many low-cost providers "have the effect of causing costs to consumers." The most evident of these, it noted, are not-for-profit and low-cost providers. "Canadian lawyers still have a monopoly on [providing] legal services and legal advice," says Steve Hyman, director of the London-based Legal Action Group. "That's a big difference. Here, the monopoly has been chipped away."

In Canada, the battle lines have been drawn. It's not just in New Brunswick that lawyers have tangled with ride insurers, for instance. For eight years, the Canadian Bar Assoc. (the longest First Canadian from addressing its in magazine—a contract that wasn't lifted until last year, when the CBA implemented

ance and law society membership fees), she's going out of business.

Law societies don't just restrict other providers, they do too their own members. Two lawyers' ability to advertise is limited. As noted in the Competition Act, the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador forbids its members from advertising discounted prices. Rules like

All these restrictions, law societies insist,

are in place to protect consumers. Lawyers who can provide legal services seem as first shoddy work. Advertising restrictions may be misleading information, both confusing the public. And unethical disciplinary practices can conflict of interest issues, as lawyers might be beholden to someone other than the client. Just like government, law associations in the public interest, says Derry Miller, treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Unlike good citizens, though, a law society's board of directors isn't elected by its members in the public Ontario law society's governing "benchers," 40 of whom are elected lawyers (another eight are government-appointed lay people, two are crime or appointed paraprofessionals). To become elected, lawyers must inevitably appeal to their constituency lawyers. "Even the appointment of Boucher's election on campaign strategy in Ontario during the 1990s and early 2000s reveals a remarkable commitment to protect lawyers' interests," for example, by keeping members' fast-lane access to W. Wesley Fawcett, the Nathan T. Wernick professor of legal history at the University of British Columbia, in a 2006 paper.

Two arguments that Canada is not so different from Australia or England, perhaps even from those countries, traditional regulatory fields to encourage competition or innovation, he says. The complaints present instead to disadvantage everyone but leave it themselves. Perhaps most significantly, legal services were becoming too expensive for all but the wealthy to afford. "In each country, the legal profession has found it difficult to respond to its critics," he writes in the paper. "Canadian legal professionals are surprisingly vulnerable to similar criticisms."

Like it or not, change may be coming. "Canada is now significantly out of step with everyone else on this," says Alice Woolley, assistant professor at the University of Calgary's faculty of law. "It may only be a matter of time." ■



HIGHER LEARNING MUST ACCEPT STINKY FEET
After a 10-year battle, Dutch university student Teunis Tembroek last week won the right to attend lectures. A decade ago, Tembroek was expelled from Groningen University because of his otherwise severely feeble. Professors and students alike demanded that he not attend class owing to the smell and even the library banned him from reading there. But a court judge ruled entry nullified. "The professors and other students will just have to hold their noses."

TEMPEST IN A BOTTLE OF MOUTHWASH

A controversial study sparks debate over the effects of alcohol

BY KATE LEMAY • It's a ritual observed by thousands of Canadians every day: brush, floss, gargle and spit. Rinsing with mouthwash doesn't just provide a scrubbed, minty feeling—it's good for our health, we're told, curbing plaque and gingivitis (not to mention bad breath). Some brands even carry the Canadian Dental Association's official seal. But the so-called healthy habit could be doing more harm than good. Australian researchers recently concluded that mouthwashes containing alcohol may contribute to oral cancer.

Tobacco use is the biggest risk factor for oral cancer, according to the Canadian Cancer Society. Combined with excessive drinking, it's even more dangerous—a heavy smoker

and Orlebar is up to 14 times more likely to develop. Even so, "there's a small group of patients who don't seem to have any risk factors," says Michael John McCullough, an associate professor at the Melbourne Dental School and one of the experts behind the report. "I noticed some were saying they'd used alcohol-containing mouthwashes over a long period of time."

In the *Keweenaw*, published in this *issue* (see *Genital Ancestry* in December, by McCullough and co-author Camille Pascoe), we conclude that a near "sufficient evidence" to suggest that these mechanisms are a contributing factor. Not only does alcohol seem to make the mouth of orfs more vulnerable to cancer-causing agents, McCullough says "in first breakdown products, acetaldehyde, also known as *carcinogen* king." While alcohol is mostly seen looked at in the liver, they argue the breakdown process seriously begins in the oral cavity. "Excessive mouthwash use, over a long period of time, will increase the amount of acetaldehyde in the mouth," McCullough says.

His hypothesis is nothing new: experts have raised the possibility these mouthwashes could be a cancer risk for over two decades. A 2007 study in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, for instance, concluded that daily mouthwash use was a weak factor for head and neck cancer, independent of tobacco or alcohol consumption [McCallough et al., 2007].



¹THE real villain in the anti-cancer story is elusive, from beverages

study in his paper). A 2005 study of patients in Brazil linked its daily use to oral cancer.

Most of the Mac and green bottles are more than 50 percent water, more alcohol than wine or beer. Some Original Mike's is 15 percent alcohol, for example, while Listerine Fresh Breath is the company's most popular mouthwash—a 22 percent. Alcohol is included as a solvent for the active ingredients and flavorings, generally five, and anesthetic, says Melissa Karris of Procter & Gamble Canada (Stam, *My Cough*). But, *Alcohol* shows, some are not.

McCullough's paper has been, to put it mildly, controversial. Soon after it was published, Laurence Walsh, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Queensland, sent back a letter to the *BMJ*: "There is no doubt that the real villain in the real cancer story is ethanol/alcohol from beverages." Alcohol, he wrote, "prolonged and repeated exposure," while mouthwash is swished around the mouth for seconds only, he wrote. Walsh also found several flaws in the *BMJ* study. McCullough cites in his review, ranging from "inconsistent observations" to limited data

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senting to safety," and notes that it's been used "by over one billion people for more than 100 years" Even the Australian Dental Association, publisher of the ADJ, quickly distanced itself from McCallough's paper and continues to give its Seal of Approval (which promotes oral health products to non-users) to several mouthwashes that contain alcohol. The Canadian and American Dental Associations do the same. The CDO committee on clinical and scientific affairs will take a closer look at the Australian review as a future meeting, says Susan Swain, the CDO's manager of clinical programs. For now, though, "if people are using an alcohol based mouthwash, there's no reason to stop."

Others are not so sure. Dr. Martin Constant is chairman of the department of otolaryngology at the Ottawa General Hospital. "I think it would be reasonable to avoid alcohol-containing mouthwashes, especially if you smoke," he says. But Swan insists that old bathroom no-nos—brush, floss, gargle, spit—is perfectly safe. "I have Listerine at home, and I use it." ■

Solomonson, a professor of oral medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, believes alcohol-containing mouthwashes are safe for everyone except children and recovering alcoholics. Not only did the U.S. Food and Drug Administration take alcohol mouthwashes off the market over 10 years ago, the theory that mouthwash produced in the mouth is "speculative, hearsay. Finally, he adds, the Australian paper was an exercise in previous research, and contains no new data.

Mouthwash makers have also moved to defend their product. Gerry Wright, a senior director, regulatory affairs for Johnson & Johnson Inc., which manufactures Listerine, Canada's leading brand, calls Listerine "the most extensively tested mouthwash in the world, with over 2000

senting to safety," and notes that it's been used "by over one billion people for more than 100 years" Even the Australian Dental Association, publisher of the ADJ, quickly distanced itself from McCallough's paper and continues to give its Seal of Approval (which promotes oral health products to non-users) to several mouthwashes that contain alcohol. The Canadian and American Dental Associations do the same. The CDO committee on clinical and scientific affairs will take a closer look at the Australian review as a future meeting, says Susan Swain, the CDO's manager of clinical programs. For now, though, "if people are using an alcohol based mouthwash, there's no reason to stop."

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IN PRAISE OF OLDER MOTHERS

How a 60-year-old new mother is part of a positive trend

BY NICHOLAS KOHLER • Though he's unapologetically polite, Tony Maynard isn't up for Las Vegas, two days after his 60-year-old son, Kasper, became the oldest woman in Canada set to give birth, delivering twin sons. The newspaper started calling incessantly. And Tony, genuinely perplexed by the interview he had long given, "It's a personal decision," he says. Nor is his son's choice for children a product of her Pasiphaea background, a media comment Tony particularly dislikes. "It's not spontaneously a cultural thing," he says. "They're independent, they're going to make one of the children and that's it—it's just a normal family. It just happens to be, they're 60. That's all."

Rajni and her boys, Manoj and Carpenter, remain in hospital, healthy but suffering from the herpox of a luxury pregnancy. Her husband, Jagan, also fits in, as a wealthy king in tooth or not. Eagerly a smoothwater worker, he sailed for years in the *Rajni*, who was refused the treatment in Canada because of her age could undergo in vitro fertilization in their native India. Last year she became pregnant with triplets. But back in Calgary, also numerous complications. The doctors remained in embryos, then delivered the twins seven weeks early due to severe bleeding.

But with the immediate health concerns of mother and sons now apparently resolved, whether the Mayer family? It's a far less even Reagen's specialist, Calgary obstetrician Colin Barth, felt compelled to discuss publicly last week. "I couldn't imagine if I was 65 having two five-year-olds running around," he told the CBC. "The energy to do that is incredible."

It was one wacky reaction among many. Not older men have long fathered children (Charles Chaplin at 71, Anthony Quinn at 81, to name Hollywood lore), and grandpas have parented children for millennia (the Prophet Muhammad, Sir Isaac Newton and Barack Obama, to name three). Now that technology permits elder women to bear

children, it's not easy to sustain an argument denying them the option. "The main concern is, at 60 years old, how long are you going to be around for your child?" says Aaron Sillescu, of the University of Toronto's Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. "But that's pretty far to ask with almost any kind of reasonable lifespan."

IT'S JUST a normal family. That's all," said the stepmom of new mother Benji Haver.



"SOMEBODY WHO TAKES THIS ON AT 60 IS GOING INTO IT WITH THEIR EYES OPEN"

And a growing body of research confirms the successes for children raised by older parents and grandparents: old people Masjori and Compston have very funerals. Older parents most mature, better-off financially and can draw upon more deeply rooted social networks than their younger counterparts. Older fathers are more maintaining, older mothers are better at interacting with their children, and both aren't likely going any where. "The type of person who agrees to this quite financing undertaking tends to be resourceful, committed, resourceful of the

above," says Kane Fuller-Thomson, a professor of social work at U of T.

Which is good for the children, if not always for those doing the work, would be found that U.S. grandparents raising children demonstrated more depressive symptoms, felt more isolated and were less satisfied with their lives than grandparents who weren't. "It certainly has its toll," says Fuller-Thomson. "Health insurance isn't necessarily great on the grand parents." But neither is old age for most.

Already there are plenty of parents the Hapens' age. A 2001 Statistics Canada study found that over 25,000 children under the age of 14 are being raised by grandparents. As many as 70,000 are parents' family members, most of them grandparents and other older relatives, are new meaning links, says Betty Carmichael, the founder of Grandparents Support group for uncles/aunts. The population is growing—up 20 per cent between 1990 and 2001—and is often attributed to poverty. Indeed, many children in the care of grandparents have been removed from their parents' homes due to drugs and alcohol, making such issues to fend alcohol syndrome a common challenge.

The 11thth presumably that none of these difficulties. But it's worth noting that research suggests even maternal grandmothers who go to a monthly letter (or face-to-face) with young-onset-onset "non-oldest" (in general the outcomes are considerably poor, considering how many families these children have in their lives). Says Palfen-Thompson, who points out that children are more likely to "feel loved" and benefit from the stability of family. Grandparents can even surpass parents, doing more with less. Palfen-Thompson cites one 1997 US study that found no-at-risk children raised by grandparents had similar health and behavioral outcomes to those living with biological parents, even though grandparents are often more financially strapped.

And who's to say Roger and Jane will exhaust their parents as easily? "I see the granddaughters out there playing road hockey with their kids," says Fuller-Thomson. "There are unbelievably impressive women. My guess is that somebody who takes on the responsibility at 60 is going into it with their eyes open."

And yet not everyone's convinced. "Go to the club?" asks Gangneung's former CEO, who has been missing her granddaughter for over a decade. "This is a club I didn't sign up for. I'm 60 years old and I'm missing a 13-year-old. I'm hormonal and she's hormonal. It's not pretty. This woman is going to be 75 when she gets her hormonal two-year-olds. When she's losing her dinner's it's cruel that she's going to be going for her." ■

A BILLIONAIRE, THE LAW, HIS BRAZILIAN EX

The stormy breakup that may redefine marriage in Canada
BY MARTIN PATRIGGION

She was the Québec billionaire in early 1993 when he was over a million dollars, just a wild-eyed gambler with a raging blood lust, crawling invisibly in the shadows. She was his Brazilian, sitting on a Brazilian beach near her home when the stranger approached and asked her name. Though she didn't have a clue what he was saying—she spoke Portuguese and he could just mutter a few words in Spanish—it was evident enough that this shrewd stranger was intrigued with her. He hung around, and though she didn't like him at first, she was charmed by his persistence. Plus, he was handsome. One night when they were out, she was relaxed, merry in a club because of her age. Other men might have been angry, this one made a funny face, dropped his pants and moaned the loudest. "He was always making me laugh," she told *Maclean's* recently, reminiscing about the long, long busy life that married supercouple in the years were on. "We did things other people thought of doing but didn't have the guts."

At one point, his friend, the son of a well-known in the government, came along. Plans in Portuguese, he tried convincing her parents this stranger from Quebec was worthy of their daughter's affections. She was 17, he was 32. Her father didn't approve, but the man who was courting her told her not to worry. "I'll take care of you," he told her, according to her testimony.

So began the 10-year relationship between the billionaire, a pillar of Québec's business community, and the Brazilian 17 years his junior. It was a transatlantic affair that produced three children, but also outside interests, numerous affairs, and allegations of profligate drug use. Ultimately it has ended up in Québec Superior Court in a constitutional challenge to Québec's laws governing unmarried

A RICHER EX? Montreal's Black (left) has given \$1.2 million to help "Lola" (right) in her fight

couples. Should she win her case, "Lola," as she's been dubbed by the local press, could walk away with \$93 million and a \$36,000 monthly allowance. She will also have ended the meaning of marriage in this country, creating a new category—beachclothes, white-cottons around the world. Over the next two years, "Lola," the self-described "single girl from village in Brazil," saw not just Montreal, but Los Angeles, Spain, France and Japan. They celebrated her 18th birthday in Tahiti. She still lived with her parents, but she left Brazil 13 times during this period, barely finishing high school because of all the travel. She wanted to study architecture. "Five could come to Canada to study," her father told her. "You could

all these nice things you love to reach," she recalled him saying. "Tell your father to go away himself." Eric said that, according to her testimony. From that point on, he picked up where her father left off, paying for everything—beachclothes, white-cottons around the world. Over the next two years, "Lola," the self-described "single girl from village in Brazil," saw not just Montreal, but Los Angeles, Spain, France and Japan. They celebrated her 18th birthday in Tahiti. She still lived with her parents, but she left Brazil 13 times during this period, barely finishing high school because of all the travel. She wanted to study architecture. "Five could come to Canada to study," her father told her. "You could

HE MET HER on a beach and showed her a life of parties, jet-setting, fabulous wealth



She was 17; he was 32. He told her not to worry, she says. 'I'll take care of you.'

walk anywhere in the world with a Canadian diploma." She says she didn't understand—where would she live? With him, he told her. "In Canada, it's normal." She testified that when asked about marriage, Eric said, "We'll see if we'll get to that point."

Lola moved to Montreal in January 1995, the beginning of what she calls the "five-star years." She remembers \$25,000 a night hotels in Dubai. She could remember Eric's offering for taxes by which said they flew from Moscow to business, and on to his company's \$25 million jet—and, later, \$40 million jet. There were three parties the yearly took at his house that went on all weekend, where she'd often focus the 60 days in residence. Sometimes she had to call her sister in Brazil to find out who they were. She'd been into drag

most of her life, but she tried drugs a few times. Cocaine wasn't the end of the world, she figured. It helped her stay awake.

Not long after, their troubles began. Eric's work made her restless at home, and she would do things she'd always dreamed of doing and the language classes she was taking at McGill University. Eric wanted to have kids, but she didn't want to get married. And there were things she couldn't do. During one night Lola said the pair hadn't because of pregnancy, despite not using contraceptives. He was also erratic, one day kind and horrible the next. Lola blamed drugs—it was probably cocaine, she testified in court—for both problems. (In her testimony, Eric would call "seven envelopes in his life.") She would call her experience in L.A. and girls would answer.

That summer, Eric returned from one of his business trips and suggested they "take a break to reflect on the relationship." He was going to go to Seville, in Spain. Unbeknownst to her, she followed, convinced he was on his \$25 million self with a rather woman. Two brutal weeks of searching later, she left for Berlin, where she knew he was attending a party. His testimony confirms that she tracked down his hotel and knocked on his door. "I want to see if you are really alone, reflecting on our relationship," she said. He wouldn't let her in, but through the slot, she could see someone, not his features. When he let her in, there was a beautiful woman with him, a black model she thought she recognized. She wanted to attack her, but he held her back. As the model left, Lola, in lingerie, stood by the window. "If I jump from here I'll die and it will be a scandal for you," she said. "Don't do that," she recalls him saying. "It's stupid. That's not how life works. Life goes on."

When he got home, he had been on the ground. He wanted her to go back to Brazil. She refused. "You want anywhere in the world with a Canadian diploma?" She says she didn't understand—where would she live? With him, he told her. "In Canada, it's normal." She testified that when asked about marriage, Eric said, "We'll see if we'll get to that point."

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happened," he said, lying in her arms. "I didn't want things to happen like this."

Things didn't get better, Loh recalls, as when the month-long partnership in Old Montreal that he knew today "it was this softening of distance, this confidence where she thought she was confident in me as well, a true place, all would be calm and exposed here, but temporary. This is going to be a cause to move into a \$1.5-million house in Outremont as it happens, a short jaunt from Eric's Mont real estate. Shortly after that afternoon, she returned to Brazil, but not Eric in the Bobs runner New Year's Eve. He'd decided to move to London to pursue her modelling career. "I was very happy living alone. I was working a lot, certain agents said I could compete against Naomi Campbell," she says. But he begged her to move to Montreal for Valentine's Day. He was very good at initiating. Their first child was conceived on Feb. 14, 1996, a beautiful baby girl, born that fall.

Eric was assistant but unethically refused to marry her. "I wanted to protect [my business] and there were professional reasons why I didn't want to get married," he would say later in court. "I respect people who get married, but it's not my cup of tea." Instead, he focused his energy on moving into his new house, a political spread on the outskirts of Montreal. He was a good father, though he travelled a lot and the relationship was as unstable as ever. "I think it would be better if we separated," he said to her in the spring of 1998. There were little indications, when she says the incident practically forced her to sign a paper declaring their separation. She was not even finishing. Separation? He had thought it was mediation to help them stay together. Then, a whirlwind succession of a few months, she became pregnant, the ex-married, her father died, and she became pregnant just again.

Escaped mediation, but wasn't even in the same country when their son was born. She says he was paying, he says it was business. At any rate, Loh began to pull away. Life wasn't always, and didn't seem to be at least any until they met. That year was 1999. "Why don't we visit to see if the world exists," he joked. "It continues, so should we."

She joined him for his New Year's party. "When can I do to make you happy?" he asked when she was home. "You could start by staying here, and then we'll see," she replied. Loh says she returned "If a piece of paper is so important to you then, stay, we'll do it." A full-on placed in his home, he was happy, a piece of plastic around her finger as an engagement ring said, just before the stroke of

midnight, said he was going to marry Loh. Their first night would be a long one on April 1st. He'd say "I'll believe it when I see it," Eric's mother said. Loh didn't see the marriage proposal, Eric said from court. He thought he was in a lie. "I probably should have thought twice about joking about this," Eric later said in court.

In any case, they were married, only a third child, born in Brazil, where Loh wanted to be. Last time was months later. Eric and she would be broke off the relationship for good. Photos had surfaced online of her with another woman on his website, a direct from New York City. "I sincerely hope other realities in my life," Eric said in his testimony. Things happened on for a few more months until Loh moved out in February 2003. They have been in and out of court ever since.

Loh is tall and skinny, her hair as dark as on the day Eric met her, but without the dishevelled curls. With her mouth full of braces, she doesn't look any where near her 34 years. Her lifestyle, the real one, is somewhere about, in the summer of 2006, she was riding around on her boyfriend's Harley Davidson. She was a half-million-dollar couple, when she pulled her over. If only to drive over the set of wheels. There are only a handful of these in Quebec, one said. The only one he knew of belonged to a certain billionaire.

"It's my car," she replied. She's hardly a typical woman in any regard. She has a stack of printed conspiracy theory DVDs, which she watches voraciously. She said stories about Eric wanting to implant their children with knowledge, in case they were kidnapped. She was convinced about the kidnapping of wealth, in case destroying the "totally respectable life" she had with Eric, while defending her purchase of \$10 million. "I don't care it," she says without an ounce of irony. "It's nice to be comfortable in life," she says, she has been since. Until 2006, when the courts compelled her to do otherwise, she was giving her \$131,000 a year in child support. In contrast, he spends an estimated \$1.5 million a year on his own care of his website, according to a broker



She says the marriage proposal was real; he says it was just a joke



ANNE-FRANCE GAUDIN is changing the definition of marriage. (DANIEL BLANCHARD)

with knowledge of the matter.) But when Loh said about her car, she was with an almost frantic note. In fact, she seems a bit like Herbert Black, the ex-husband who has found his legal battle in the name of money. "Money's nice," she says, "but I would be more happy to change the law for other women."

In fact, money made Loh and Eric's relationship was actually quite normal in the province where they live. Quebecers in general have a punked view of marriage, par-

haps because of its religious and historical (since 1969, a marriage could only be officiated by a priest.) The province of marriage is a more than twice that in the rest of Canada. Oddly enough, it's also in Quebec that women's couples have the fastest rate and responsibility when relationships end.

"Quebec has a two-fold policy: handle protectionism for married couples and create an environment for unmarried couples, with no legal duties or obligations," says Robert Leclerc, a family law professor at McGill University. "Unmarried couples in Quebec owe each other nothing as a result of their relationship. In other provinces, you live together for a stated period and there's a duty to support your partner, as there is for married people. In Quebec, an unmarried couple could be together for 40 years, but the law still sees them as two strangers who happen to share a house."

The end result can be messy. "Some people say divorce is actually a virtue of marriage, because there is a responsibility to deal with the dissolution of a relationship," Leclerc says in Quebec, unmarried couples are more to negotiate a contract—their own "marriage"—with the help of a lawyer, but law actually does. According to a study by Quebec's money association, fewer than 20 per cent make legal arrangements at the time of a breakup. "These letters weren't sent for her, Loh would be considered a dime of the wealth Eric earned during their time together."

"I think that the [protectionism] [of unmarried couples] is an expression of different values between Quebecers and the rest of Canada," Leclerc says. Eric's lawyer "You can march on an equality debate by saying something happens differently in other provinces." Leclerc says to Macdonald outside the courthouse on the penultimate day of the trial. During the conversation, he claimed Loh's partner for pictures for the news media assembled outside. His client, he points out, has done nothing to violate court law; in fact, is being so suddenly against the idea of marriage, has hardly dated from most Quebecers. (Eric has since moved in with another woman, with whom he has two children. He has made his reluctance to marry clear to his current girlfriend, he said in court, just as he did with Loh.)

Heretofore, her remark about women being like

comes, says Gaudin, one of Loh's two last years. A member of construction and family law, Gaudin, working on behalf of a Quebec gay couple, helped change the federal definition of marriage. (In Canada, marriage is a federal law, while the definition of civil and solemnization of marriage is provincial.) Spontaneously, profane, quick with a quip—"Herbie's a good boy," she says of Black's financial support of Loh, "He always takes care of his girlfriends"—her tongue has landed her in the spotlight during the trial.

Along with Quebec's support and family protection law, she is also challenging the federal definition of marriage for the second time in less than five years—so that it includes unmarried couples who have lived together for three years (one year if they have a child). "A friend of mine," she says, "I met her lawyer, Danielle Gervais, and to me, 'You know Anne-France, it never occurred to me that gay and lesbian couples would end up having more rights in a sense, than married couples.'"

Regardless of the outcome, the small army of lawyers on both sides of Loh and Eric's case will likely seek to appeal Judge Charles Hodge's decision, expected in June. Herbert Black says he'll finance it all the way to the Supreme Court. He's an immense fellow, stately enough when speaking about Quebec's marriage law. When the subject of Eric came up, a string of unrepeatable words usually spills from his mouth. He became involved in the case in 2006, will after he and Loh were no longer an item. His money helped pay for several family experts, as well as forensic accountants to dissect Eric's wealth. He must get to the case—in 2010 he spent \$100,000 and won a US\$512-million trust case against Sobhy's and Christian's auction house. He was also instrumental in getting Loh \$131,000 in monthly child support in 2006.

These days, Loh spends her time parenting—she has just custody with Eric—and thinking about what she'll do with the money. Rich people, she discovered, "have had a lot," but she's the different. She has lived the best of her life with Eric. After the kids grow up, the "I'll get her because I deserve and will get the inheritance." He'll get her pilot's license, buy a helicopter and work for the Red Cross. Africa. Her future Brazil. "If I have the money," she asks, "why not?" ■



ARMENIA: A LOTTERY TO HELP THE TAXMAN

Placed with the problem of shopkeepers not sending sales tax, the government has launched an agent as monthly lottery sales but not new taxes. A lottery number. During the month of the lottery, the government will draw lucky account numbers and award customers between \$20 and \$20,000 in cash. A government spokesman expects the draws will have Armenian clumping for sales receipts, forcing merchants to hand in sales tax.



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TESTING THE LIMITS

Behind the scenes at the test run for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics

BY KEN MACQUEEN, JONATHAN GATESHOUSE AND NANCY MACDONALD • PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK COLLINS

Like right and day," says 25-year-old Canadian mogul queen Jennifer Heil of the change in atmosphere, support—and rejection—since she joined the national team in 2004. Heil called her last run at Cypress Mountain in B.C. on the Saturday night of a golden weekend, missing two gorgeous jumps and blowing down the final stretch of moguls so smoothly you could have balanced a glass of water on her helmet. Or make that champagne. Heil and her freestyle jumpsters earned Canada's first medal at a World Cup weekend on the West Vancouver mountain, scoring eight podium finishes in moguls, high-flying moguls and mogul-a-lies, the cross, which makes an Olympic debut next year on this very hill. It was their contribution to the winners' weekend in the history of Canadian winter sports—30 official and unofficial medals at

international events staged in B.C., Bulgaria, France and Norway.

The timing, just days shy of a year from the Feb. 12 opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, couldn't have been better scripted. The string of successes, including simultaneous international events staged by the Vancouver Olympic organizing committee (VANOC) on Cypress, the figure skating arena in Vancouver and the riding centre in Whistler, is welcome proof news. It comes in the Olympic host city and province remain buoyed by the prospect of rising costs, a global economic downturn, the city's reluctance of the 2008 Beijing athletes' village, and ongoing road fears of a Montreal-style post-game debt.

The Vancouver 2010 event is a spectacular weekend all winter, but they were hardly a stroke of luck. The real story is told behind

the scenes. And rather like Heil's Saturday night delight, it only looks easy because you don't see the donkey work, the meticulous planning and narrow escapes from disaster that came before it. The 16 "test events" in and around Vancouver this year are the first in Games organizers will come to a dry run—a process opportunity to train thousands of volunteers, and fine-tune everything from the field of play to the on-snow season.

Staging the freestyle event on Cypress, a busy ski hill at the height of its season, is a nice in point. The planning began more than two years ago at Tim Gaudy, VANOC vice-president for sport, tried to find a venue where the independently run international freestyle and snowboard tours could attract. The boardman this weekend (the back-to-back events provide VANOC and the athletes with a sample of the conditions they might face) it was more of a headache for Cypress staff—a fact they made abundantly clear.

Despite having made about \$16.6 million out of VANOC for Olympic improvements, the independently operated hill's workers for the event seemed grudging. Chalk up one

were posted in the day lodge reading "No access for athletes." Clearly, even the best units of exposure the top story from 18 cameras provided. And the resort allowed just 100 ticketed spectators, forcing others to spend \$60 as a lift pass if they wanted entry. Peter Judge, CEO of the Canadian Freestyle Association, shared the operators, calling the setup "one of the most difficult situations I've ever witnessed in my 31 years of competitive class level sport." Gaudy was far more diplomatic: "We're trying to protect the mountain as little as possible," he says. "That was no mean feat. It took almost 800 people [136 staff, 512 volunteers, 73 contractors] to build the course, set up equipment, fencing and tents in as short a time as possible, and operate the event. "We're pushing our troops quite far, but that's a good thing to learn."

One part of the Staphan challenge did involve building great views up a mountain. There was a serious air trap moment when VANOC took delivery of the massive generators needed to heat tents, and power cars



At 1000, 136 staff, 512 volunteers and 73 contractors to build the freestyle course

and timing equipment. They had no idea they'd weigh in at 1,800 lb. apiece. In the end, they strung them on to landfill-style blade series attached to the front of VANOC's gear, catapulted toward snow cuts. After a slow crawl up the mountain there was no way they could be unloaded. The generators were left strung on the crudely used blade cars. "Just by that, we hit half our capacity to move stuff around," says Gaudy. "The challenge after this weekend's event is getting out the specially built mass. "You can't leave those massive generators out there for the skating public." Trust me, says Gaudy, who tried



SLEDS ARE NOW IN FIGHTER-JET TURE, PULLING OVER 5 Gs

the sleds cross run, with its massive jumps and steep, banked turns, it's no place for the uninitiated.

Neither is Whistler's Olympic Sliding Centre. By the end of first days of World Cup events, the 1,400-m-long track had proven itself the fastest sled run on earth. A dozen competitors in the four-man bobsleds attacked the previously unattainable 150 km/h barrier. Entering the 10th and final turn, the sleds were no lighter jet assembly, pulling more than five Gs. "The curve did that fast," says Mary Pedersen, the 16-year-old who won women's skeleton gold for Switzerland at the 2006 Games. "It's a very difficult track. You have to work, work, work."

With extreme speed, however, comes an extreme danger. A plethora of hypotheses during training had track managers scrambling to smooth out the new facility's "anomalies"—the almost imperceptible bumps or dips that can throw a sled off course as it corners through the corners. It was pure talent work. Every centimeter of the track is shaped by hand, built up through repeated water markings, then scraped and smoothened by crews wielding giant-sharp blades. It's an art, explains former Canadian bobsledder Bob Storey, now the president of the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation. Advisers from Europe were brought in to teach the VANOC team the sport-specific nuances.

"A guy may be able to pull a car on a perfectly smooth track, but he has to be able to do this," says Storey. Whistler's ever-changing weather, and ski-hockey air, also present their own unique challenges. The result is a just what

the federation wanted, fast and challenging, with the risks still manageable (no slide cars on ice for Storey, who won in a 1986 crash at Lake Placid that took the life of teammate Sergio Zardini). "You can make a small mistake and go through, but mistakes by mistake and you'll pay for it," he says.

Whistler has something of a monopoly on the 2010 Games' most dangerous spots. Along with sliding, the resort town will host ski jumping and the alpine races. As a result, there will always be an air ambulance on standby at the alpine village. Joan Maguire, manager of medical services for the Whistler event, has been among the demands of the Olympics. On the mountain, where organizers worry about shifting weather creating havoc with races, the pressure is on to quickly assess, stabilize and evacuate the injured—chopping them off within 12 to 16 minutes of the spill. At the sliding centre, there is a luxury of time, but not space. For weeks, Maguire's team has been lifting with its own hoisted, figuring out how to safely remove injured athletes inside the track's icy, phone-booth-like modules. The first track will be capturing the fall. When a sled crashes on Whistler's steep pitch, it continues all the way to the bottom, where a sharp turn—meant to slow the sleds—often sends it back up the track. The resort now has its sleds fly into with the sled's hooks onto the finish, backed with grabbing the sled. So far, everyone's luck has held, says Maguire—bumps, bruises and shivers, but nothing really serious. "These people are incredibly resilient," she says.

But the threat could be that the modern Olympics is at such a point what happens off the field of play is as vital. Most competition sites will have two teams to maintain the crowds. And every venue has its own designated team. After "Vinyllik" hit the world's leading center's crowd control center, Christie

Nicolay, VANOC's executive producer/spot producer, watched her team of "producers"—track announcers, sound, graphic and video gaffers who make the content of major sport events—manufacture stereotypes. The seemingly laid-back Californian has worked the Olympics, but it's her MTV and X-Files experience that shapes the show. The commentary is rapid fire, the music loud, and a former MacMillan '91 is on hand to interview covered spectators for the big screen. A key innovation for Vancouver 2010 will be website allowing athletes to specify what times they'd like to hear while competing (see example, Canadian luge pilot Helen



in "like driving a race car," explains Kiland, a veteran of the Calgary Olympic Oval: each has its own particular "night lives" and "own ways.") But in juggling two wildly different events inside a single rink, Kiland is facing a far more daunting task. For figure skating, he'll have to make the building warmer and the ice softer and thicker, as well as repair the deep cuts left by the speed skaters—a severe injury hazard. He'll also have to tear down short track's thick safety pads and erect a judge's platform. All this, he'll have to do three times over the course of the two-week competition—sometimes with a hour-stopping three-hour window. But it's Vancouver's high humidity that's keeping Kiland up at night. "If it's cold and wet outside"—a likely combination in Vancouver in February—"we have to pre-dry the mode" before each work-out even begins. Still, he figures now the humidity and 300 tons of compression—all part of the \$1.5-billion upgrade to East Vancouver's 40-year-old Coliseum—are up to the task.

In his bid, however, Skate Canada isn't crazy about the venue, whose east side and sports a giant sticker from the Canucks' '94 playoff run. "There's had a brutal new facility for figure skating," says CEO William Thompson. "It was spectacular." This is an old hockey rink. There's spots where could be panned, others where a could be—pandered up a little," he says.

In an event as large as the Olympics a certain amount of chaos is inevitable. The true measure of VANOC's success will be in how it deals with the seasons no one can control. "It's hundreds of little things," says Tim Gaudin. The executive flexibility his boss, executive vice-president of sport and

VANOC's success will be in handling "hundreds of little things." The master is flexibility.

venue management, Carby Prisman Allinger, knows that all too well. The 1996 Olympic silver medalist for Canada in speed skating was manager for sport at the Salt Lake City Olympics when the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks "changed everything." For a while it wasn't clear if the Games would even go ahead. Then, five months later, cost, security plans, budgets, and communication plans all had to be rewritten.

Having come through that, she's especially unafraid by the challenges great and small facing these Games. The mostly sold-out first events have taught the planners plenty. At the Whistler Nordic Center, for instance, there was an unexpected crash of winds, an awkward dumping of the white stuff, and a shortage of that loveliest of essentials, the snow shovels. So the venue managers were stuck on the 100-km round up to Squagnum and cleared out the local Roma. "You get shovels," Prisman Allinger says with a laugh. And people to push them.

A giant challenge is the impact on VANOC of the global economic meltdowns. Costs have been cut in areas like staffing and promotion to preserve the quality of the venues, and the experience of the athletes, the public and the TV audience, she says. Far from being source of a pessimism and doubt, she believes the Games will prove an antidote. "We're a bit of hope for the nation," she says. "Something to look forward to." Managing an Olympics isn't that far removed from the philosophy that just put all those athletes on the podium. It's not enough to win on the good days. You train to win on the bad days, too. ■

EVERY VENUE WILL HAVE A DJ SPINNING TUNES



Uggen's team ran to Full On by Coldplay, and Kanye West's Nicolay is also in charge of the medal ceremonies, and will soon put out her closing act for protesters. They won't have to be ideologically rooted, as was the case in Beijing, and roughly the same bright, she says. And in keeping with Canada's image, appropriately multicultural. On the production side at least, it's one of the few details that seems to be ironed out. "We're really prepared," says Nicolay, who has been on the job since October 2007. Of course, after Athens, where they were still pouring concrete the week before the opening ceremonies, everything is relative.

It's not to say that a year out there aren't still some bumps in the road. At the Pacific Coliseum, home to both figure skating and short track speed skating, they're still trying to figure out how to work the new ice-making machines. Last weekend, the 200-ton crew ran down VANOC's \$370,000 battery-powered—yes, zero emission—Olympic ice element, and it wasn't pretty, says "Ice man" Kacerev Kiland. (Driving since machine

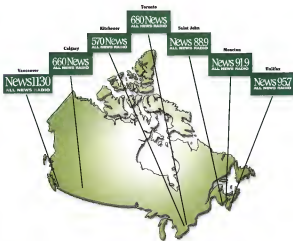


GETTING HIGH TO PLAY CRICKET MATCH

Richard Kirtley is planning to hold the highest match ever attempted by organizing the "Elevated Test" for this April. Kirtley and two teams of 22 amateur players and 28 amateur medicals, groundsmen and even spectators will climb to the 3,385-m Gorki (then plateau on Mt. Everest. Kirtley got the idea from an earlier ascent of the world's highest peak when he realized the plateau resembled London's The Oval cricket ground.

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Good golly, Noddy's back!

Controversial kids' author Enid Blyton is in the news again for a new book starring her famous wooden toy by SARMSHTA SUBRAMANIAN

books

Britain's libraries must have been flowering last summer when readers of a nationwide poll of favourite writers were announced in the press. In top place, beating out Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens, was children's author Enid Blyton, who has gleefully devoted for 43 years now, the unimpeachable and popular Enid Blyton. The author of an astonishing 700-odd books which sell in millions of copies a year in sales—Blyton is perhaps the most popular author you've never heard of. Her name may mean little to North American readers, but in France, in Germany, in countries like Hong Kong, Australia, Portugal, Singapore and India, Blyton, who wrote steadily in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, remains not merely the beloved author of such series as Noddy, The Famous Five, The Magic Faraway Tree, and Malory Towers, but a true of passage, an icon capturing the magic of childhood.

In the U.K., she's also a lightning rod for controversy, and after the poll results were announced, there was censure. Anthony Hume, writer of the TV drama *Enid Blyton*, complained in the Daily Telegraph that Blyton was "being asked to go on in front of a furore." The children's author Philip Pullman compared her series to "medievalism in Noddy on blue hat" with his friend Big Red (red hat), and the gollywogs in *Toyland*

covered issue." They're only Blyton's most recent detractors. The aforementioned libraries viewed her as a thick and simple toy who kept kids from serious reading. Progressives got her books banned from libraries on charges of racism, sexism, middle-class bias, one writer called her work "fascist." And she didn't find much truck with the other side either. The conservative British journalist Cilla Welch famously accused Noddy, a little wooden fellow who lives with his friend Big Red in *Toyland*, as an "unusually prejudiced, xenophobic... writer, spreading, twisting, sneaking, do!" Blyton died in 1961, but the debates over her work survive, and may soon be reignited: this witless, spiteful doll celebrates his 50th anniversary this year. A new Noddy book is out in New Britain, his first in 35 years—*Noddy's Birthday Surprise*, written by Sophie Ben El-Mechaieq, Blyton's great-granddaughter, and illustrated by Robert Sydnall, who worked on the original series in the 1950s. Other

series are under way: a mass edition of Noddy and his friends in his latest, *Noddy's New Year*, and a new Enid Blyton story centre in Dorset, set up by Yvonne Buckner, a member of the Enid Blyton Society. The Noddy books are banned near to China, where it's hoped they'll win over some 95 million kids. And tapping into the Noddy market, the actress Jenna Miller and her fashion designer sister, Savannah, who own the label TwentyTwelve, are unveiling Noddy-themed styles at London Fashion Week this month. Savannah rolled in the Tower of London about Big Red's stylish "blue swing jacket" and "cropped knee trousers with the green stripe."

All of which ought to push along a Blyton revival already in full swing. The past year has seen the launch of a Disney cartoon, *James and the Giant Peach*, and spin-off books: *The Famous Five's Survival Guide*, *The Illustrated World*, in May, her 90th birthday, Chorus, is releasing new versions of the *Walking Chair* and *Malory Towers* series—part of an anniversary plan to reissue the Blyton brand, already worth a reported £1.5 million a year in sales. "A lot of children don't know Enid Blyton isn't a real author," explains Jilly Noran, senior VP of brand development. "And frankly, they don't care. She's the author of the books they love."

The charm of Blyton is so simple to explain and totally elusive. In a sense she was the original Rowling—on one style she is a mother with a plan, instantly turned in to a child's-eye view of the world. And that's exactly why she's so popular. Teaching school herself for 10 years, Blyton was always taking all advice from her own children. The *Famous Five* tales encompass the secret lives of spies, princes, dukes and strange, spooky magic lands. The *Five Find-Outers* and the *Five* are a realm of venturing and detective escape for older kids.

On the other hand, Blyton had the same success as A.A. Milne in the whimsy of a *Dorothy Porter*. Her writing is not literary, or particularly clever. Her characters are broad, open, rather than developed, roundoff figures. But Blyton never saw herself as a writer, again. In 1941, a professor at the University of Oxford and author of the bestselling *Children's Literature and the Mystery of Childhood's Literature*, she described herself as a storyteller in the Mother Goose mould. "If you look at





GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE students stage *Lulu* in Toronto. All seven plays will be performed over three days in Toronto in May

Living with Oedipus for 15 years

A classic myth set in seven plays over three days with student actors is a labour of love

BY ALEXANDRA SIMP Many great men from Sophocles to Voltaire have tackled the Oedipus myth. More contemporary ones pretensions include a film with Christopher Plummer as king by Stanislavski, even a pop song by New York singer Regina Spektor. Now it's the turn of a new version by Kingston, Ont.-based playwright Ned Dickson, who is currently staging the family history of Oedipus, which takes place over 150 years.

Dickson's production is a logistical challenge (seven plays, eight performances). The epic involves seven plays, each based on a character in the story. The seven plays have been divided up and are being staged locally by Canadian theatre students at Memorial, York, Concordia and three other universities, George Brown and Humber colleges in Toronto, and Laurier College in Vancouver. The student series will roll by to Toronto to put on the whole series, called *City of Wine*. The shows will be staged over three days and the complete cycle will run from back to back, from May 5 to May 9.

Initially, Dickson was commissioned to write just one play about Oedipus. In 1994, a friend in Toronto asked the Canadian playwright, it was a student actor. But by that time, the playwright had become hooked on the myth. No one had ever written a play about the complete history of Thebes, the birthplace of Oedipus and the god of wine. One play became three, then seven. The number of actors ballooned from a handful to over 100. Some of them have worked on the show for years, starting the project at the beginning of their theatre program, and staying it now as they finish their degree.

The Oedipus story is a familiar part of our cultural landscape. Oedipus is the banished son who unknowingly kills his father and

falls in love with his mother, not realizing they are related. Mother and son have four children together before they realize the crooked nature of their relationship. Still, the playwright wanted to look at the story's complexity. *Seven plays* have given Oedipus his own complex, but historically, the play presents him as a self-sacrificing hero and great leader, says Dickson.

The historical family saga has taken 15 years to produce. During that time Dickson met his partner and had two children, now aged four and seven. While money was low, the playwright coached politicians in the art of public speaking. He also worked in construction, but he ended up leaving his hand, crushing his fingers in a power drill that got caught in a drill. Even now, he says, "mangled and strange-looking," he says, and they hurt in the cold and when he types. Making production money required another kind of strategy: "I told the Canada Council that the plays tackled both race and the disappearance of the family in order to emphasize the myth's relevance to modern times."

Staging the story didn't come cheap, even with student actors. The plays were produced by the independent theatre company Night's Owning, which raised several hundred thousand dollars. It cost over thousands of letters asking people for money. Seven sets

foundations and two private companies contributed financially. With the funds, Night's Owning brought in about 70 professional actors and about a dozen directors, including the award-winning Jeffrey Hatcher, to work with the students for several years to polish their performances.

Their solo city performances in being staged at a time when theatres are struggling in 60 years, says Rob Denham, a theatre professor at York University. Last week, he was pulled out of Rob Roy Theatre, scheduled to open in March in Toronto, and the Toronto-based theatre in that time theatre has also cancelled a show scheduled for next month. The current trend in independent Canadian theatre is to avoid financial risk with smaller productions and a cast of just a few actors. *City of Wine* has more than a hundred.

The seven plays' Toronto set, but the series is already creating "buzz and excitement," says Denis Sailer, a professor of the arts studies at McGill University. Northampton this week has never been in Canadian theatre, he says. At the play last, one of the seven, and currently being staged in Toronto, the students delivered an engaging performance, with lively humour and live music. As we go, about 10 actors were featured on the small stage, all playing more than one role, including guitar, drums, mandolin and cello. The audience was cheering, laughing and clapping. After years of work, an ancient Greek myth had finally come to life. ■



PERFORMANCE OF THE WEEK... FEIGNED INSANITY
Swedish art student Anna Odell feigned insanity so well she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. First she convinced police that she was suicidal by appearing ready to dive off a bridge. At the hospital, she kept herself calm to entertain while she kicked, screamed and spat. When she revealed that she was only making performance art for her art degree, hospital doctors disavowed her. Theatricalising that Anna's next performance may be in jail.

PHOTOGRAPH BY COLIN G. COOPER

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Briefing Notes for President Barack Obama
Visit to Canada, February 2009

The Country-Our neighbours, Canada ranks second in the world in land area and 34th among five-star spring break destinations (ahead of "Greenland" and just behind "The Bahamas"). Canada's population density—3.5 inhabitants per square kilometre—is among the lowest in the world, but crowded enough when you consider that one of those inhabitants used to be Ho Chi Minh.

Systems of Government, Canada is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. At one time a British colony, Canada assumed its political autonomy in 1982 after just 125 years of thinking it through really, really carefully. Britain, which by then had carefully forgotten about the whole "Canada" thing, ultimately agreed to grant independence, though ready to stop there. Britain then hit me on the Quips.

National Symbol, Canada's Prime Minister is obliged by law to accept a fixed date for federal elections, unless he or she has the unanimous support of "not feeling like it." Meanwhile, convention dictates that upon losing the "confidence" of the House of Commons, the Prime Minister must either resign or lose gracefully to the presiding bodies of the Governor General, who has a formidable array of powers that he'll use and conceal as he may like to save face of which.

The Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, age 45. He's known as "Steve" among people who don't care that he has to be called "Steve." No, the hair is real.

Recent Political History, In the fall of 2008, Prime Minister Harper was re-elected with what's known as a minority—no "majority"—government. So far we can't determine if this means he can't count on any

of the nation on Wednesday nights and every other weekend.

Political Environment, Mr. President, while it is true that you maintain record-high popularity levels among Canadians, history suggests that American leaders don't always get a word in edgewise when in Canada. Consider the experiences of Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Michael Ignatieff.

Air travel, Because this is not an official state visit, there will be no formal military band to greet you at the airport. Respecting customs, the Prime Minister will instead confer a more informal Canadian airport greeting—

of the nation on Wednesday nights and every other weekend.

Current Economic Issues, On one hand, Canada appears to be in recession. On the other, it can't be in recession because—according to the Prime Minister himself—the country was in a recession once, it would have already been a recession before. You might wish to seek advice from the country's finance minister, Mary McFay.

Security Issues, The "Big American" provision of our standards bill has caused significant concern in Canada, where business leaders fear that protectionist measures could dictate in duties devoted to the production and export of iron, steel and film canisters (The Canadian government is said to be preparing draconian retaliatory legislation: Bill C-97, An Act to Force Them to Keep Mike Myers).

Timing of Visit, You will be arriving in Canada just after Flag Day, on which Canada's Prime Minister has announced that he will be visiting the United States to meet with President Obama.

Weather, You will be arriving in Canada just after Flag Day, on which Canada's Prime Minister has announced that he will be visiting the United States to meet with President Obama.

Important Note, Canada is considered part of the G8, though kind of like the tambourine player in a rock band. Thanks to the continued efforts of U.S. and Canadian governments, the public services beautifully aware that at least four American thespians have been acting during tragic over-acting mishaps involving William Shatner.

Canadian money is worthless.

For press, Prime Minister Harper has been "working off" a book about hockey that just came along.

Canada is part of the G8, though
kind of like the tambourine
player is part of the band

ending the foreign affairs minister to end the service level until you come out of the service. You're concerned to "just give 'em a wave." The 95 attached to this file should cover your share of the gas money.

The Capital, Your brief visit to Canada will take place entirely within the city of Ottawa, one of the world's most modern capitals and a metropolis renowned throughout Canada for its two or three restaurants that now stay open past seven o'clock. Ottawa boasts professional hockey teams, urban transit (one-dime) and many working stoplights.

Climate, Also, nothing.

National Symbols, The beaver, the common loon, the plowboy beard.

Language, Canada is officially designated a bilingual country, meaning you can easily get by speaking either French or English in every part of the land except almost all of it.

ON THE WEB: To read Feschuk's on the business and politics blog, visit macleans.ca/youask.

NICOLAS HUBERDEAU

1959-2009

A dairy farmer who worked from dawn until dusk, he knew each of his 'girls' by their spots

Nicolas Huberdeau was born on Dec. 3, 1959, one of nine children—three girls and six boys—born to René and Marguerite, dairy farmers and strong Catholics from St. Lawrence, Man. The tightly knit francophone village of 300—so “isolated” among anglophone communities where the Church remains important, says town councillor Phil Falaré—sat on the eastern edge of the Qu'Appelle Valley, 10 miles from the Saskatchewan border. “We were a poor family,” says Guy, the eldest, “as we made our own fun.” Nic, an “isolated” little boy, was working the fields and milking cows by the time he was seven, says Guy. Using a wooden table, he’d design “his special barns,” figuring “which cow should live in which stall,” says Cam, their youngest brother.

There was never any doubt where Nic was headed in life, and at 11 he made it official when he dropped out of École Saint-Jean. “His passion was farming,” Cam explains. At 14, Nic and Guy took over their parents’ dairy operation six years later, at a dance in St. Lawrence. Nic met Rebecca Fernald, a nurse’s aide a decade his junior. He was “the shyest person,” says Rebecca—“the kind who’d go bright red at the drop of a hat.” She found his gentle manner, they were married within a year, and were later joined by two sons, Shane and Matthew.

Guy and Nic, who lived in separate houses on the family property, were up by 5:30 every morning to milk the herd, which peaked at 100 at the time. Before milking for hours, they’d put in four hours cleaning the barn and feeding the cattle. Add to that mowing, haying, baling and harvesting in the summer and their small-scale grain operation. At dusk, they’d milk their herd all over again. There was the night after was another part. For Nic, who knew each of his “girls” by their spots, it was chatting between life. “With respect to, the cows would stay away,” says Rebecca. But they treated Nic “You could see it in their eyes. It was like the Pied Piper with them.”

Six years ago, Nic and Guy sold the dairy operation, becoming the second-to-last of St. Lawrence’s 15 family-owned dairy farms to throw in the towel. The reason for the decision was a conversation Guy had with his workaholic, eldest son, Angèle—“she one evening loaded up a ‘She and her husband planned to retire together.” “Yes,” says Guy—but on her 34th birthday, she was diagnosed with cancer. “Don’t do like I did,” Angèle told Guy, who works before

the dawn—five for today. “I said, she left with it,” says Guy. “When you’re dairying, it’s 24/7, so we called it quits.” They stayed in their house but let the fields go fallow. The decision was much easier on Guy. Nic watched until the very last cow was loaded onto the truck bound for the University of Wisconsin, which had bought the herd. “He was never the same,” says Cam. “A part of him went that day.” Once, Rebecca teasingly asked what he’d do if he was a million bucks. “Buy back my cows,” he said without missing a beat.

A jack of all trades who could fix just about anything, Nic brought his work ethic to his new job in St. Lawrence’s town downtown, closing the sidewalk, maintaining the sewers and cemetery, and running the trash—cleaning the town, fixing drains and creating jobs. “You couldn’t give him any more jobs or stress because he’d be back at work every morning for sure,” says Richard Rossland, his boss.

A year and a half ago, Nic, who’d been fit as a fiddle his entire life, started getting congested, again misperceptions. Eventually, a cold and sore throat couldn’t figure out what was wrong. By November, he was in bed and had to stop working. By January, he was 40 lb. thinner, mostly blind, and in and out of Winnipeg’s Health Sciences Center. Still, “the town wouldn’t hire anybody else,” says his friend Tugene Steward, a

group of volunteers did Nic’s work, in hopes that he’d return.

On Jan. 13, Nic was prescribed a combination of seven different steroids and antibiotics. It relieved his pain, but left him extremely disoriented. On Jan. 14, when St. Lawrence was holding an annual hockey tournament, Nic put on his blue, insulated overalls and drove his white, ’95 Grand Marquis to the arena while Rebecca was out. “In his mind, he was going to work,” says Guy. Nic was sent home. Around 9:30 a.m., he stopped for gas, but seemed very confused, says his sister Jean-Marie Bernard. He was the last to see him drive. Five days later, police found Nic’s car, snowed-out, on an ungravelled road just north of 100 km east of St. Lawrence. It had been -40°C with the wind chill (he’d left his door open). An RCMP dog team spotted his body three quarters of a mile from the car. Guy believed the medication made Nic hopelessly confused, and he ended up stuck on the snow-filled road. “Instead of following his six tracks was, he walked forward,” says Guy. “His nose gave him a light ahead of him.”

BY NANCY MACDONALD

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